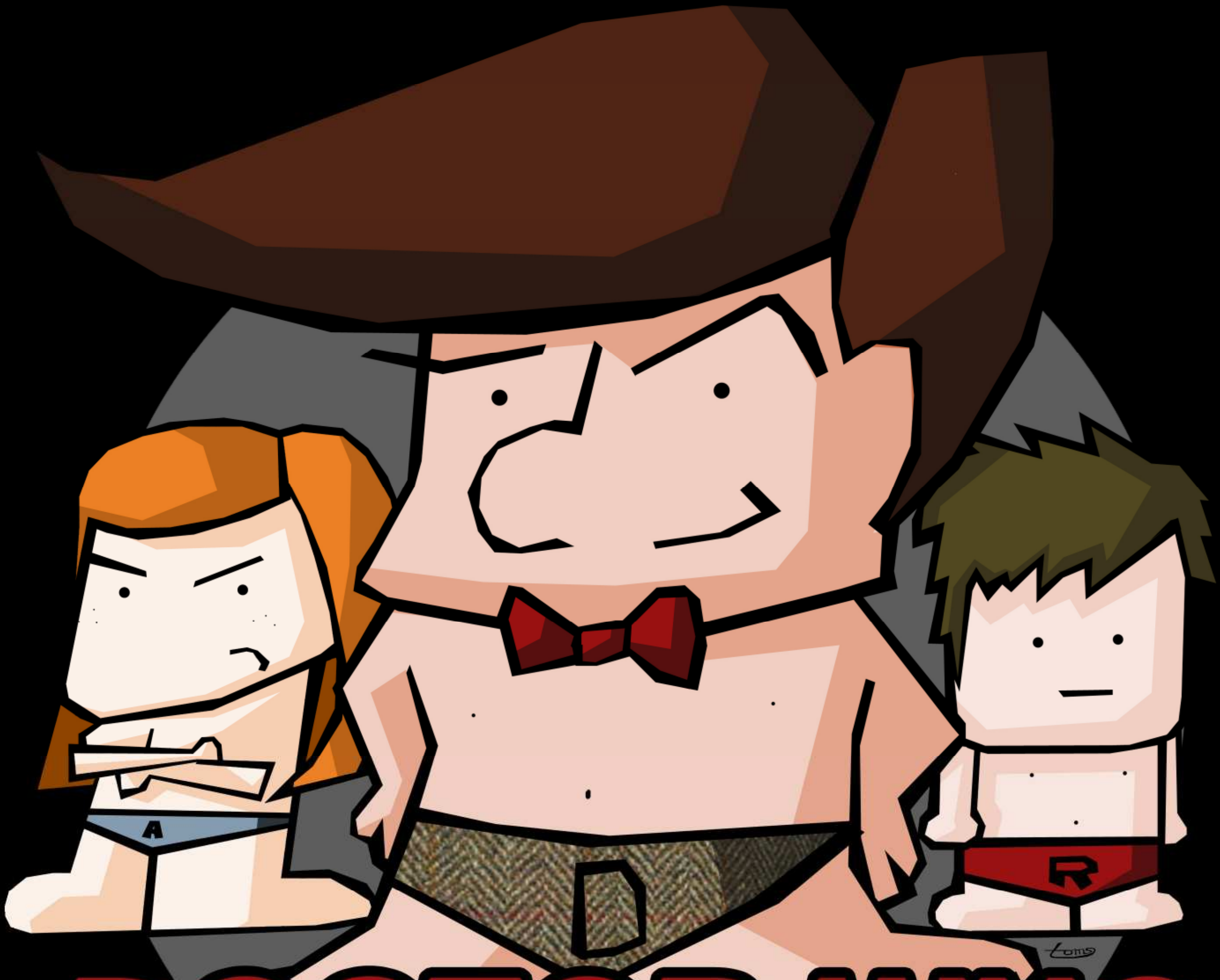
whotopia

ISSUE 23 | MAY 2012



DOCTOR WHO

IN BRIEFs

WE REVIEW THE ENTIRETY OF BOTH DOCTOR WHO SERIES 6
AND SARAH JANE ADVENTURES SERIES 5 ALL IN ONE FEATURE!

PLUS ALL THE REGULAR FEATURES AND MORE BESIDES!

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It might be said that ***Whotopia*** has been a touch slow out of the blocks where Matt Smith's Eleventh Doctor is concerned. Since he crashed onto our screens on New Year's Day 2010 we've been busy tackling all manner of matters, but we've not yet given number eleven the spotlight and, quite frankly, it's about time we did.

Whotopia 23 kicks off with a bumper set of Series Six reviews, compiled by Jon Arnold, Nicholas Blake, Richard Farrell, Bob Furnell, Jake Johnson, Emily Jones, Gary Phillips, Daniel Tessier and new contributor Ewen Campion-Clarke. Reviewing this split-series and weighing up its many story threads was no mean feat, and my hat goes off to the team for their sterling efforts.

Although it's not a review per se, Matthew Kresal explores the central conceit behind Neil Gaiman's *The Doctor's Wife* and reflects upon just how much of a new idea is a TARDIS in human form.

Still on the topic of reviews, Gary Phillips and Jon Arnold also give us their thoughts on the fifth series of the *Sarah Jane Adventures*, its three stories given poignancy by the sudden and tragic death of Elisabeth Sladen. Truly, for a young generation of fans brought up on the heroic escapades of Sarah Jane Smith and her team, teatime viewing won't ever be quite as special again.

Our feature pieces, *'Going Native'* by Jon Arnold and *'The Moffat Effect'* by Gary Phillips, delve into the shifting landscape of the series' storytelling since Steven Moffat took the helm. It's certainly a topical subject and both Jon and Gary do an admirable job.

Series Six's penchant for fake Doctors has given regular contributor Daniel Tessier pause for thought as he embarks on a whistle-stop tour of some of the character doubles that have cropped up in the series. Daniel also runs an eye over the 2011 Christmas Special *'The Doctor, The Widow and the Wardrobe'*.

Our regular slice of Skarosian controversy gets a double helping this time round, as Thomas Spychalski dons the *'Dalek's Advocate'* for the first time to look at Season Nineteen's Achilles' Heel, *Time Flight*; and newcomer Thomas Cookson delivers our opening *'Dalek's Advocate'* response, by way of a reply to Jon Arnold's case for Michael Grade (see Whotopia 21).

Four of our regular columns appear this issue, as Nick Mellish presents us with another selection of Target novelizations; Grant Bull toys with the concepts of hero and genius; Bob Furnell looks at North American fanzines; and I consider one of the programme's most influential behind-the-scenes icons, the great Barry Letts.

Bob also weighs in with another instalment of his *'The Stories That Might Have Been'*, this time tackling the era of the Fourth Doctor.

| Jez Strickley, editor

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THE MOFFAT EFFECT

It must be admitted that the winning team of David Tennant and Russell T Davies was going to be a very hard act to follow. As the Steven Moffat/Matt Smith era enters its third year just how does it measure up to its predecessor?

Bringing back any old television series is a risky affair and it must be admitted that very few of them actually reach the pinnacle of success of the original. The attempt to revive the soap opera *Crossroads* seemed doomed to failure almost from the start. Comedians Vic Reeves's and Bob Mortimer's attempt to re-launch the 1960s classic *Randall and Hopkirk Deceased* was only moderately successful. The same can be said of the ITV revivals of two former BBC classics: *Doctor Finley's Casebook* and *Maigret*.

Bringing back *Doctor Who* was always going to be a tricky operation and, initially, even Davies himself doubted that the return would be a success. Thankfully he was proven wrong. Initially with Christopher Eccleston, and then with even greater success with David Tennant, *Doctor Who* scaled and surpassed heights of popularity with the viewing public it had not seen since the Philip Hinchcliffe-produced era. All good things must come to an end and after five successful years, Davies and his fellow executive producer Julie Gardener decided to move on, as well as the incumbent Doctor, David Tennant, arguably the most popular and successful Doctor since Tom Baker. Steven Moffat, perhaps the most successful writer of the programme's new era, was announced as Davies' successor. But could he maintain the high standard set by Davies?

Matt Smith, Karen Gillam, Alex Kingston and Arthur-Darvill-Evans

The answer to this is questionable, and cannot be found in any one particular area of production. Firstly, we need to look at Moffat's choice of Doctor. On that cold evening in early January the nation waited eagerly to hear the name of David Tennant's successor. Moffat had claimed to favour an older Doctor and I myself, eating my tea at the time remembered my jaw dropping open when the words *"Younger than we've had before"* were uttered. In 1980 Peter Davison had been 29, what were we getting now? A 12 year-old?! My pessimism wasn't helped by my first sight of Matt Smith: a name and a face which I and most of the UK hadn't heard of; and my first sight of someone who appeared to come across as an immature buffoon didn't help matters.

Fortunately, his role as the ambitious police officer in the 2009 detective series *Moses Jones* raised my expectations that yes, Smith could pull it off. However, my doubts returned firstly through a BBC News 24 report of Smith at the Cannes Film Festival where he seemed drunk and, at the end of which, embarrassingly grabbed the female reporter. Then came the closing minutes of *The End of Time* Part Two (2010), and my dismay as the new Doctor intoned the ridiculous line: "I've got legs!" Yet, three months later and having enjoyed *The Eleventh Hour* (2010) I was convinced that Matt Smith WAS the Doctor. Moreover, Smith has remained a shining constant of the Moffat era, and his recent award for best actor at the National Television Awards is well deserved.

But a Doctor alone does not a series make; a companion is needed, and still, it is difficult to define just where the problem with Amy Pond lies. Is Karen Gillan not a very good actress? Is Amy Pond a poorly developed character? Has Moffat become bored with the character?

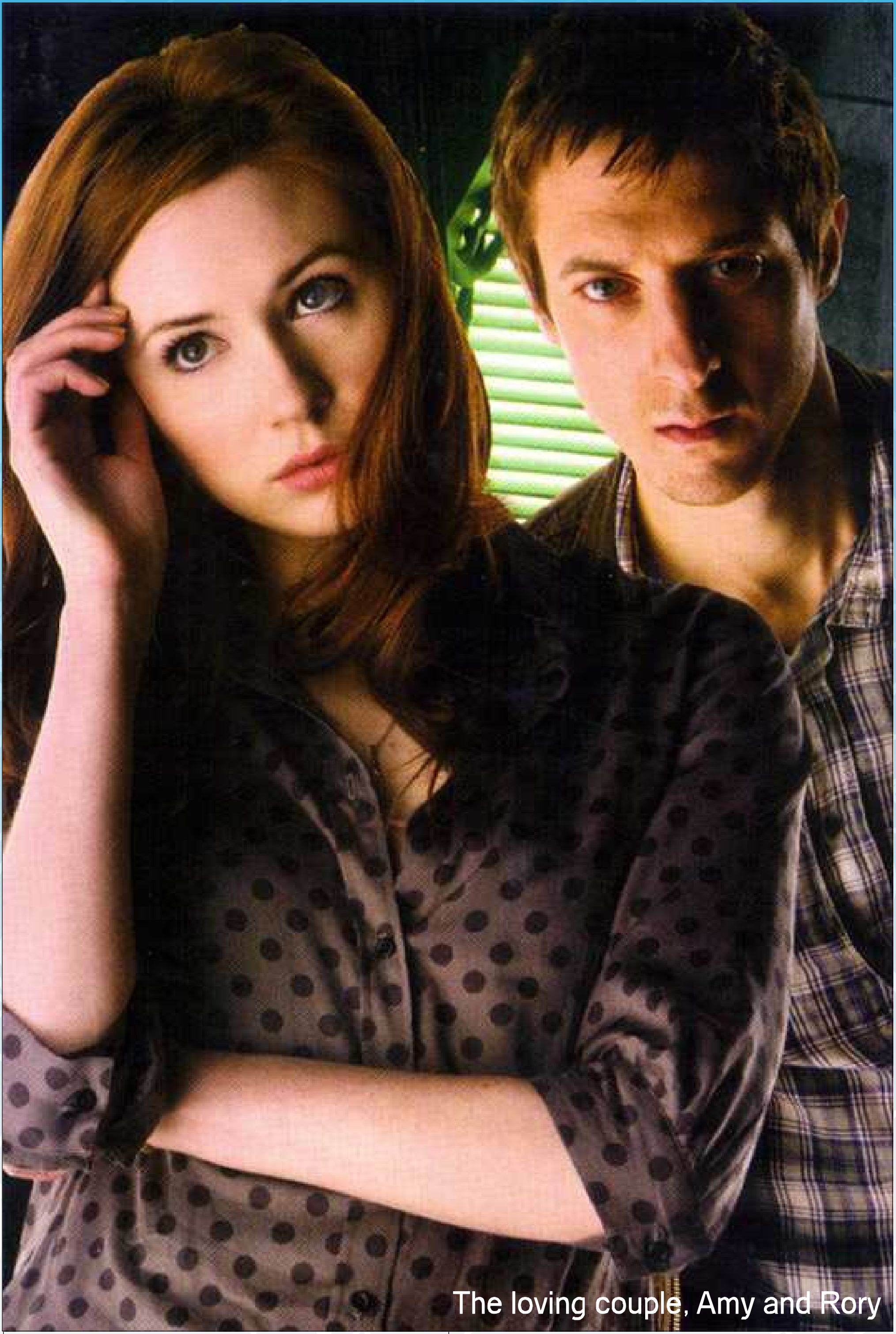
Many, and I freely admit to being one of them, feared that Donna Noble would be a difficult character to follow. With Donna, Davies had achieved the impossible by turning the moronic loudmouth who had shouted her way through *The Runaway Bride* (2006) into one of the series' most popular companions ever, giving competition to Rose Tyler – who could possibly replace her?

The choice of Karen Gillan was a surprising one. She was a relative unknown whose only real claim to fame was a cameo role as a soothsayer in the Series Four story *The Fires of Pompeii*. Her debut season was impressive; both she and Matt Smith had an engaging chemistry of a type which had not been seen in *Doctor Who* for many years. It is therefore a pity that Moffat very quickly appears to have become tired of the character, and other than having her become a brood mare, it seems that he has not known what to do with her in her second season. The naturalness which was so engaging in Series Five appears to have disappeared almost completely in Series Six. Apart from the superb *The Girl Who Waited* (2011), wherein she pulls out all the stops aided by Nick Hurran's superbly thoughtful direction, Gillan seems just to be going through the motions, and given the mediocrity of most of the scripts, who can blame her.

"Amy's and Rory's story is coming to a heartbreaking end" said Moffat. From that, I think we can assume that at least one of them is going to be killed off. This, if anything, I think we can take as a sign that Moffat *has* grown bored with the Ponds. In the past most companions left because they felt it was time to leave the series, some having stayed on average two to three years. Recently, we have had a change of companion every 13-14 episodes which barely gave us time to know the character before they were gone. Thus it would be nice to think that Amy and Rory will have stayed for roughly (in Rory's case) two and a half seasons. But, alas, this is not the case, for the invigorating approach Karen Gillan displayed in Series Five of being an ordinary girl whisked off through time and space soon gave way to tedious mediocrity in Series Six. Indeed, after spending one half of the season as a Ganger and the other half as a brood mare, the character of Amy has seemed one-dimensional and banal, and thus her departure will come as a great relief.

Sadly, I can say much the same of Rory. In Series Five he, like Karen Gillan, delivered a refreshing take on the role of the companion, as he portrayed a young man who joins the TARDIS crew on the day of his stag night. Sadly, it wasn't to last long, and by the way in which Rory undergoes one 'death' after another one cannot be sure whether Moffat doesn't know what to do with him and just keeps killing him as might a bored child playing with its toys.

Other than his latest 'death' in *The Doctor's Wife* (2011), Rory fares rather better than his wife in Series Six, but again, for all that one can be sure of the fact that Moffat is bored with him. Indeed, the only line Rory is allowed to deliver with any conviction throughout Series Six is *'Where is my wife?!"* to the Cyber platoon in the early moments of *A Good Man Goes To War* (2011). Once more, it is a sad fact that it will be a relief to see Rory go.


The loving couple, Amy and Rory

However, not every fault with the Moffat era can be solely aimed at Moffat himself. One thing which seems quite obvious from episodes of the late lamented *Doctor Who Confidential* is that executive producers Piers Wenger and Beth Willis did not have the creative passion for the programme that Julie Gardner and Phil Collinson had in spades. It remains to be seen how new executive producer Caroline Skinner helps to shape the programme. Aside from the producer, every era of *Doctor Who* has had its core of regular directors: Christopher Barry, Derek Martinus, Douglas Camfield, Michael E Briant, Paddy Russell, Fiona Cumming, Ron Jones, Peter Moffat, Pennant Roberts, Chris Clough, Graeme Harper, Euros Lyn, Charles Palmer, James Strong etc.

The boss man (Moffat far right) with Matt and Karen

have all stayed long enough with the programme to stamp their mark on the series. By the first episode of Series Seven, Matt Smith already will have worked with 15 different directors. Whilst this undoubtedly keeps the series fresh and the viewer has the comfort that a poor director may not be around for very long, it doesn't afford the Moffat stories the creative backbone that other periods of the series have enjoyed.

So what then of incumbent showrunner Steven Moffat himself? Since the series returned in 2005 Moffat can be said to be one of its very best writers, almost a new Robert Holmes; and thus this made him a favourite to succeed Davies as showrunner. Series Five got the Moffat era off to a good start with a set of enjoyable stories combined with the crack-in-time story arc. The series was not without its problems, though. The new Daleks introduced in Mark Gatiss' *Victory of the Daleks* proved to be all-but universally unpopular and, according to the British newspaper *The Sun*, have since been axed from the series, with Moffat claiming that the next time the Daleks appear they will have lots of different designs. The Silurians returned for the first time in twenty six years but again the new design has proven controversial, with many claiming that the Silurians now look too human, although the popularity of Madame Vastra and her assistant/lover Jenny (see *A Good Man Goes To War*) has gone some way to redress this criticism.

Moffat's greatest creative success began towards the end of the Tenth Doctor era when the story *Silence in the Library/Forest of the Dead* (2008) introduced the mysterious archaeologist Professor River Song, with the rare factor that she and the Doctor keep meeting in the wrong order, starting with her 'death'. In her first three stories River Song, superbly played by Alex Kingston, was flirtatious but intriguing. The problems began as soon as we learnt that Amy was pregnant. Come the revelation by River in *A Good Man Goes To War* that she is really Melody Pond, and fandom's interest was waning as they had guessed this weeks before. By the time the split season returned at the end of August 2011 with *Let's Kill Hitler*, for the first time under the mediocre direction of Richard Senior, River had become an irritant and, one now gets the feeling, surplus to requirements. More, one wonders if the departure of her parents will finally see the end of River Song.

After a superb debut season, Moffat's second series in charge, Series Six, seemed overly complex, too dark and lacking in both likeable characters and warmth. Indeed, only Commander Strax, Madame Vastra and Jenny and Val came close. Moffat has said that Series Seven will be very different to Series Six, and I for one am keeping my fingers crossed that this is the case. One can only hope that it is a return to the enjoyable stories of Series Five and not some new form of storytelling. Further, it would be nice to have a new companion who is just that, a companion, free of the family excesses and the barely suppressed sexuality of the Davies years and the emotional baggage of Series Six. Give Amy and Rory's successor(s) a back story by all means, but let us hope that Moffat doesn't play the emotional card again.

The real problem with the Moffat era is, however, greater than the merely creative. Whatever faults one can put at Davies' door, there is no doubt that for five years he was solely devoted to the show, gave it his all and made it the success it was. Moffat, on the other hand, seems far more interested in his other, and it must be said, far greater success *Sherlock*. Perhaps spreading himself too thin is one of the reasons for less consistent storytelling and a fall in viewing figures since he took over? Crucially, Moffat needs to choose either *Doctor Who* or *Sherlock* before the former, which is far more profitable to the BBC, begins to suffer.

At the finish, there is nothing much wrong with the Moffat era that a little more devotion and concentration, plus a little less ego, couldn't cure. There is certainly life in the old dogs (Moffat and *Doctor Who*) yet.

| Gary Phillips

GOING NATIVE

You knew what you were getting with Russell T Davies. Big mad pulp science fiction adventures which were used as the background to character dramas in the style of the serial dramas he spent much of the 1990s writing. That style largely changed only cosmetically over the four series plus specials he oversaw – it's most obvious in that his season-long plot arcs were accompanied by emotional arcs for the Doctor and companion. These combined in the season finales, with Davies often seeming more interested in having the character arcs make sense than the plotting. Even the specials which ended the Tenth Doctor's reign had their own little character arc, culminating in Tennant's regeneration into Matt Smith.

Whilst that change of leading actor is obviously important, particularly to casual viewers, it's the change behind the scenes that's arguably more important to the show, simply because it sets the tone. Certainly the lead actor is a key component of the show, and one by whom a show can stand and fall, but the key role on modern *Doctor Who* is the 'show runner' post, one which essentially involves complete control of the show's creative direction. Everything we see on screen essentially depends on the occupant of this post, from the identities of the lead actors to which stories we see on screen. As pointed out by Tat Wood and Lawrence Miles in their *About Time* series, the history of the show makes more sense if looked at in terms of who was producing and script editing than who was playing the Doctor. It might be stating the obvious, but in those terms the transition from Davies to Moffat is actually more important and jarring as that from Tennant to Smith.

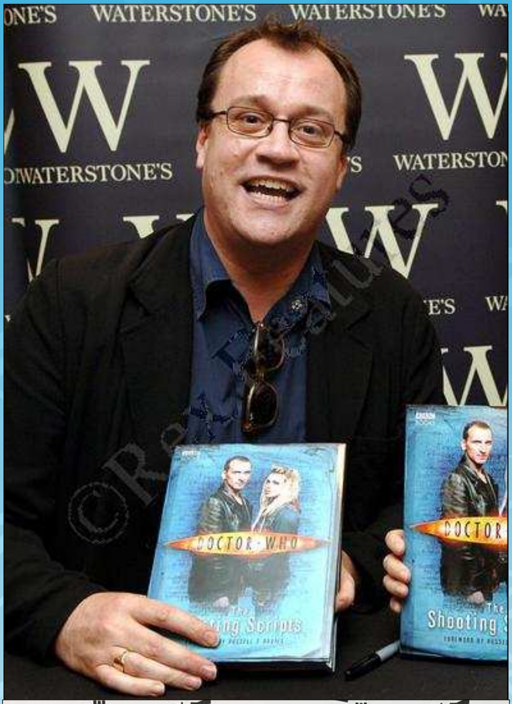
> *"Whilst that change of leading actor is obviously important… it's the change behind the scenes that's arguably more important to the show…"*

Davies' visions of *Who*, as I've already said, reflected his background as a writer on soaps and character driven dramas. Moffat's background as a writer is very different. He debuted with *Press Gang*, a drama for the teenage audience, but subsequently the main body of his work has been comedy. And whereas Davies seemed happy to wave by loose plotting in service of character, Moffat's background almost can't allow him to do that, at least not without a fight. Good comedy demands tight plotting, and both Moffat's seasons so far have depended far more on plot than character, pieces of plot being revealed over the season before paying off in an epic timey-wimey season finale.

Moffat's two seasons so far have had a tighter overall plot than Davies seemed to prefer; aside from Davies' third season, many arcs consisted of judiciously dropped hints which were explained later but didn't really hang together as a larger story. But whereas Davies' style largely remained static over his time on the show, Moffat's vision of the show changed subtly between his first two seasons. As his interviews when he took over said, he saw *Doctor Who* as a modern fairytale. And by and large that's what we followed by a series of science-fantasy stories which fitted Moffat's vision – there were invisible monsters, those statues that moved when you weren't looking, dream demons, creatures under the ground, some fishy female vampires who largely fit right in to the more savage and sexual roots of vampire stories... largely it all fitted the fairytale style Moffat had outlined.

But then the fairytale of a girl and her not-actually-imaginary best friend ended in *The Big Bang*. Amy was all grown up and married and ended up having learned the lessons from her fairytales (literally in the case of the Doctor's bedside story in that finale), knowing enough to turn the tables and save the Doctor. It's the same arc that each companion's had in their first season since the show returned, an arc of empowerment and the broadening horizons that travelling with the Doctor brings. Thing is, despite Amy jumping back into the TARDIS after her wedding, that fairytale narrative had ended, and something had to replace it.

We had our answer inside the first few minutes of *The Impossible Astronaut*. Out with misty, damp European tales and in with bright and brash American imagery. We've not only changed continents in the season opener, but the stylistic cues mainly now come from a different source. Movies, existing as they do in isolation and costing what they do, aren't a viable source for a full season of *Doctor Who* to draw inspiration from, so instead Series Six widens its remit and generally takes its cues more from modern American versions of mythology, the comic book and the pulp fictions which came to prominence in the early 1960s. Not coincidentally these would be the American fictions to which a British child growing up in the sixties and seventies, as Moffat did, would have been exposed. In come big iconic images (partly due, of course, to the production team's wish to maximize the impact of their filming in America), such as the widescreen vistas of Utah, and River's iconic pose that serves as her entrance to the main plot. We get defining American iconography: a 1950s diner, Richard Nixon, Apollo 11 and the moon landings, skyscrapers at night and the Silence as a cross between the men in black and the mythic little green men.



THE PALEY CENTER FOR MEDIA

> ***"...whereas Davies seemed happy to wave by loose plotting in service of character, Moffat's background almost can't allow him to do that..."***

It continues straight away in *The Curse of the Black Spot*. This might be based on the old European pirates who preyed on commercial shipping between the Far East and the United Kingdom (indeed, it's based on a real-life incident), but the version of pirates it uses are drawn more from the sort of buccaneer seen in one of the biggest twenty-first century film franchises, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and the lineage of swashbuckling films from which it derives. It's borrowing from a more modern source but it ties into the playing with American-inspired iconography. The crew isn't the bunch of ruthless murderous robbers they'd have been in real life, but more peaceful – even if the script neuters them deliberately, they don't seem reluctant to embrace peace. And the emergency medical hologram? Just a madder, easier on the eye version of the Doctor from *Star Trek: Voyager*.

The Doctor's Wife blurs the boundaries, both as a result of originating in the season beforehand and because the writer is equally as renowned for comic work as for his playing with extant mythology. The imagery of House's pocket dimension is reminiscent of Tim Burton's skewed, highly stylized take on fairy tales, but where this really homes in on the comic book mindset is in the way it retells the Doctor's story, including the start of his journeys, but gives that story a simple but effective twist.

The Gangers two-parter again draws on a complex mixture of American pulp fiction, Jennifer's Ganger effectively having the same superpowers as Plastic Man or Mr Fantastic (depending on which of the major US comic publishers you prefer). The whole issue of slavery that the episodes touch on is of course deeply ingrained in the American psyche and the storyline here is reminiscent of such fictional treatments of the subject as *I, Robot* crossed with sci-fi horror *The Thing*.

The plotting of *A Good Man Goes To War* has parallels with the building up of a super team in an effort to solve a crisis – there's even a parallel in the way recent Marvel superhero films have fed into the forthcoming Avengers movie. Following that, one of the most famous covers in US comic book history featured Captain America punching Adolf Hitler's lights out. If you look

Knitting
for girls

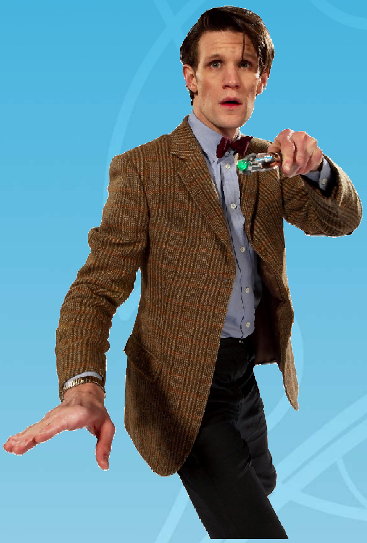
at the comics produced around the time of the Second World War, it's a common fantasy that the likes of Captain America, the Human Torch and the Sub-Mariner could take out the iconic Nazi leader. *Let's Kill Hitler* borrows that imagery with Rory assuming the Captain America role, although here it's played for the preposterous idea it is rather than as propaganda about a country's strength. Further on in the season and *The Girl Who Waited*'s sterile environment on Apalapucia is drawn straight from the pre-*Star Wars* and *Alien* SF of the 1970s. And the mysteries of the hotel in *The God Complex* are *The Shining* by way of *The Twilight Zone*.

> ***"Moffat's great strength as a writer is his ability to craft tight plots where things unexpectedly fall into place."***

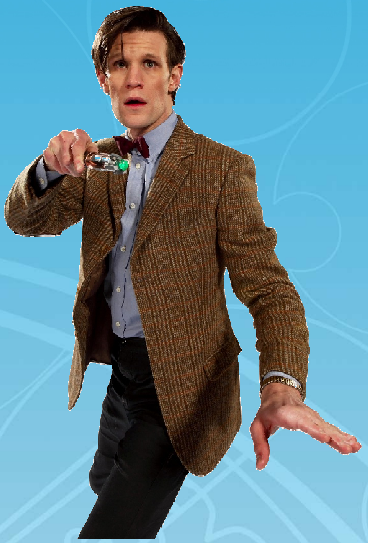
Moffat's great strength as a writer is his ability to craft tight plots where things unexpectedly fall into place. That's a very comic book approach, where the monthly release schedule allows a story to be built up over a long period of time (if not necessarily in the number of pages) which tends to lend an epic feel to proceedings. The plot arc of Moffat's second season is a perfect example. It was extended over nearly six months by the inclusion of a summer break, included a couple of standalone stories, and in the mid-season and end-of-season finales consciously provided stories designed to feel epic. Old friends and enemies returned, often caught up as background detail to the season's story. Old enemies were used in fresh ways; a Sontaran nurse or an interspecies lesbian Victorian Silurian adventuress are the exact sort of fresh slants that comic book writers like to use on old concepts and characters. In terms of the plot itself Moffat, unlike the Doctor, very rarely lies, but he does approach the truth in unexpected ways. *The Impossible Astronaut* sets up the Doctor's apparent death at the start of the season, but it's a slight cheat in that it's a narrative puzzle that the viewer has nowhere near enough clues to solve as yet – the Teselecta is not an answer that could be easily foreseen, and hasn't been foreshadowed. Instead, as with the narrative arcs often used in comic books the plot is gradually unfolded and the pieces slowly doled out over the course of the season until the elements shown over the course of the season slot neatly into place in the finale.

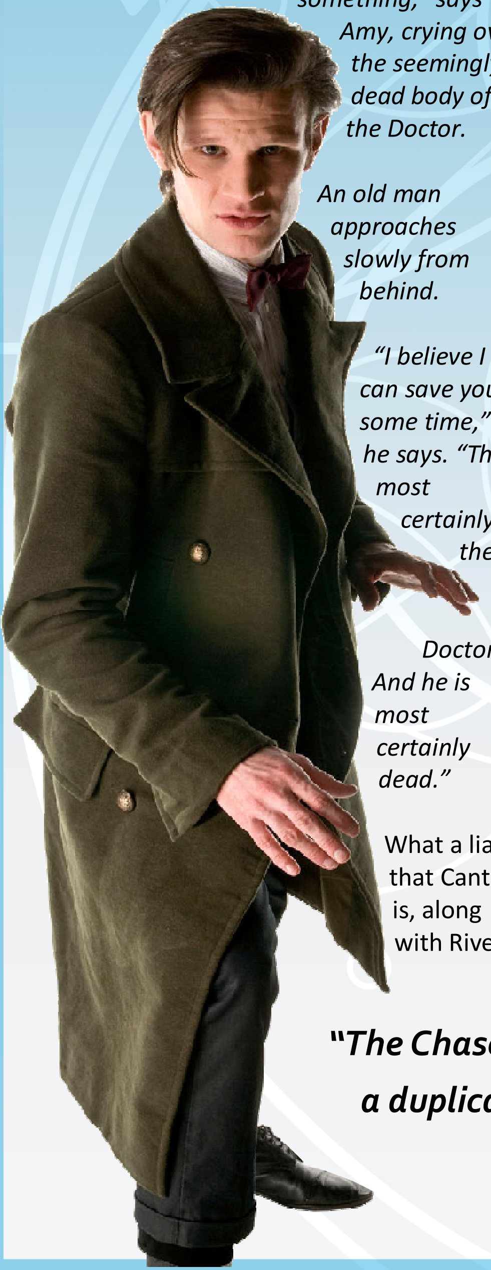
So why the move from British to American iconography? Aside from the possible narrative reasons already outlined, the obvious motive that presents itself, is in the way the BBC has begun to promote the series in the US, to try to break *Doctor Who* as a major export to the US. It makes commercial sense, with the series remaining one of their flagship properties. Instead of being absolutely resistant to American influence and taking the Richard Curtis route of presenting an almost parodied version of stiff upper lip, tea drinking England, this season has played to the show's strength of absorbing other forms of storytelling and injecting them with *Doctor Who*'s unique fictional DNA. It doesn't resist the new foreign influences, it absorbs an American influence and uses it to try to evolve the type of story the show can tell. Even the immensity of American pop culture is simply absorbed by *Doctor Who*'s elastic storytelling capabilities, becoming more fuel to the storytelling fire that's one of the show's real strengths.

| Jon Arnold



Double Trouble





"Maybe he's a clone or a duplicate or something," says Amy, crying over the seemingly dead body of the Doctor.

An old man approaches slowly from behind.

"I believe I can save you some time," he says. "That most certainly is the Doctor. And he is most certainly dead."

What a liar that Canton is, along with River Song, and, indeed, Steven Moffat. It was a cheap trick – dress up a shape-shifting android as the Doctor, shoot it so we think he's dead, and have his companion ask the obvious question to put us off the scent. Matt Smith's second season as the Doctor strung out to five months of viewer speculation. Still, this wasn't the first time that the creators of *Doctor Who* had played such a trick.

Way back in 1965, the producers of the original Doctor's second season tried exactly the same ploy. In the closing moments of *Journey into Terror*, episode four of *The Chase*, the Daleks unveiled their most nefarious plan yet: an android replica of the Doctor. Cue closing titles. Next week: *The Death of Doctor Who*!

It has to be said, Terry Nation's script for *The Chase* doesn't really go to the same lengths to sell the idea as *The Impossible Astronaut* (2011). By introducing the duplicate Doctor first, Nation makes it blatantly clear that the 'Doctor Who' destined to die is the impostor. It's hardly a visual success, either. Such early stories can be best appreciated by making allowances for cheaper, less sophisticated production values, but it's hard to forgive – or even understand – the decision to sometimes have a stand-in actor play the robot Doctor. Edmund Warwick looks only vaguely like William Hartnell, and no amount of voice dubbing can convince the viewer otherwise!

The Chase has the distinction of being the first *Doctor Who* story to feature a duplicate of the Doctor, and it began something of a tradition. Copies, clones and look-alikes abound throughout the series. Most commonly it's the Doctor who finds him face-to-face with himself, but his companions also suffer the same strange fate from time to time.

Android duplicates like the Teselecta appear several times. *The Android Invasion* (1975) features robotic doubles of both the Doctor and Sarah Jane, while the Daleks attempt to create duplicates of the fifth Doctor and his companions in *Resurrection of the Daleks* (1984); we can presume that these would some be form of android, as with their copy of the first Doctor. Both the Doctor and Peri are duplicated in *The Caves of Androzani* (1984), leading to another red herring Doctor-killing cliffhanger, albeit one that is exposed immediately in the next episode. Robotic duplicates abound in *The Androids of Tara* (1978), a story which already has

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Android duplicates like the Teselecta appear several times. *The Android Invasion* (1975) features robotic doubles of both the Doctor and Sarah Jane, while the Daleks attempt to create duplicates of the fifth Doctor and his companions in *Resurrection of the Daleks* (1984); we can presume that these would some be form of android, as with their copy of the first Doctor. Both the Doctor and Peri are duplicated in *The Caves of Androzani* (1984), leading to another red herring Doctor-killing cliffhanger, albeit one that is exposed immediately in the next episode. Robotic duplicates abound in *The Androids of Tara* (1978), a story which already has more than enough double trouble in the form of Princess Strella, who's a dead spit for Romana. The troublesome shape-shifting android Kamelion could be seen as a precursor to the Teselecta. However, while the Teselecta copies both the Doctor and Amy, Kamelion seems content with channeling the Master, Peri's stepfather and King John!

The duplicated Sarah Jane from "The Android Invasion"

The duplicate 5th Doctor and Peri ("Caves of Androzani")

Prince Reynart's duplicate ("Androids of Tara")

Androids are common, but by no means the most common form of duplication. Cloning is a popular alternative. This is, of course, the classic science fiction form of cloning, the kind that results in fully grown copies with the memories and identities of their originals, and often their costumes! We first see the Doctor cloned, along with Leela, in *The Invisible Enemy* (1977), via the Kilbracken Technique. This miracle of science allows the creation of fully functioning duplicates of humans or Time Lords seemingly out of thin air, fully clothed and self-aware, although with a distressingly short life span. A built-in use-by date is a useful get-out clause for a writer in a clone story, and is used again in *The Sontaran Stratagem* (2008) allowing an *ersatz* Martha Jones to be easily disposed of.

The Doctor's latest two incarnations have both been on the receiving end of this peculiar practice. In *Journey's End* (2008) the tenth Doctor manages to get himself copied during a "biological metacrisis," when his handy spare hand gets supercharged with regenerative energy. A handy tap from Donna Noble results in an extra role for David Tennant, as a half-human, snog-happy Doctor 10.5. Unlike most hurried clones, this extra Doctor survives beyond the end of the story, and is apparently living happily with Rose Tyler in a parallel universe. Three years later, the Doctor's subsequent incarnation gets himself duplicated in *The Rebel Flesh* (2011). The Doctor's Flesh Ganger sacrifices himself at the end of this two-parter, but not before supplying a possible red herring in the mystery surrounding the Doctor's murder. We are left to mourn this Ganger Doctor, but Amy's Flesh clone is dispatched with little ceremony a short while later. Even River gets the Ganger treatment – although she's still a newborn at the time, going by the name of Melody Pond.

> ***"For some alien menaces, androids and clones are just too much hassle. The popular alternative is shape-shifting."***

For some alien menaces, androids and clones are just too much hassle. The popular alternative is shape-shifting. While the Teselecta is a shape-shifter, it is also a robotic machine, and therefore quite distinct from those alien creatures who elect to change their own forms. The Rutan that crash lands in *Horror of Fang Rock* (1977) only disguises itself as a gruff lighthouse man, but the Zygons wholesale Scots duplication extends to the Doctor's faithful friend Harry Sullivan, while that monstrous succulent Meglos bonds with a human body in order to take the Fourth Doctor's form. Much later, the malevolent Prisoner Zero takes on the form of the eleventh Doctor, although the new Doctor doesn't yet recognize his own face!

Undoubtedly the most mysterious incidents of doubles in the *Doctor Who* universe are those which come with no explanation. Throughout time and space, doubles of the Doctor and his companions sometimes just turn up. The Abbot of Amboise, in *The Massacre* (1966), is the spitting image of the Doctor in his first incarnation. After his regeneration, the Doctor appears identical to Ramon Salamander, *The Enemy of the World* (1968) (save for their respective hairstyles). It's not just the Doctor who bumps into perfect lookalikes. Nyssa is the spitting image of Ann Talbot, while we've already seen that Romana's first incarnation looked exactly like Princess Strella of Tara. The Doctor, Nyssa and Romana all meet their doubles on planets alien to them – perhaps, somehow, different planets reuse the same humanoid forms? It's still an astonishing coincidence that the Doctor keeps stumbling into them.

Romana based her appearance on Princess Astra of Atrios

Romana clearly enjoys looking like an alien princess. When she regenerates, she chooses, after trying on a few bodies, to settle on the form of Princess Astra of Atrios. Perhaps the third Romana could have been played by Carrie Fisher? Even a character who isn't yet travelling with the Doctor isn't immune to this duplication, although there's often a familial explanation. Martha Jones looks an awful lot like her cousin, Adeola, who the Doctor was forced to kill just a few months earlier. Later, both the Doctor and Rose note a resemblance between Torchwood agent Gwen Cooper and her distant ancestral cousin Gwyneth, although the Doctor suggested this was down to "spatial genetic multiplicity."

Surely not every incidence of an actor repetition in the series can be down to some mysterious genetic phenomenon? We can theorise that the images Commander Maxil and the Sixth Doctor were both taken from the same Time Lord bodybank, perhaps, although no one onscreen ever points out the resemblance between two characters played by Colin Baker. But is Amy Pond somehow related to a soothsayer in ancient Pompeii? Are Bret Vyon and the Brigadier an example of spatial genetic multiplicity? Do all those many, many characters played by Michael Sheard *really* look alike? It all brings us back to *The Chase*, after all that messing about with Dalek androids, surely the Doctor would have noticed the suspicious similarity between Steven Taylor and Morton Dill…

| Daniel Tessier

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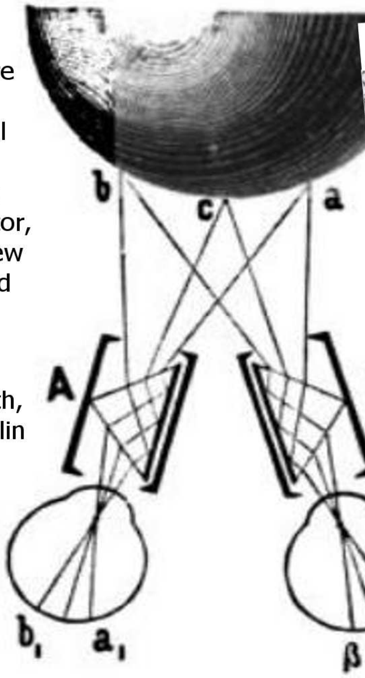

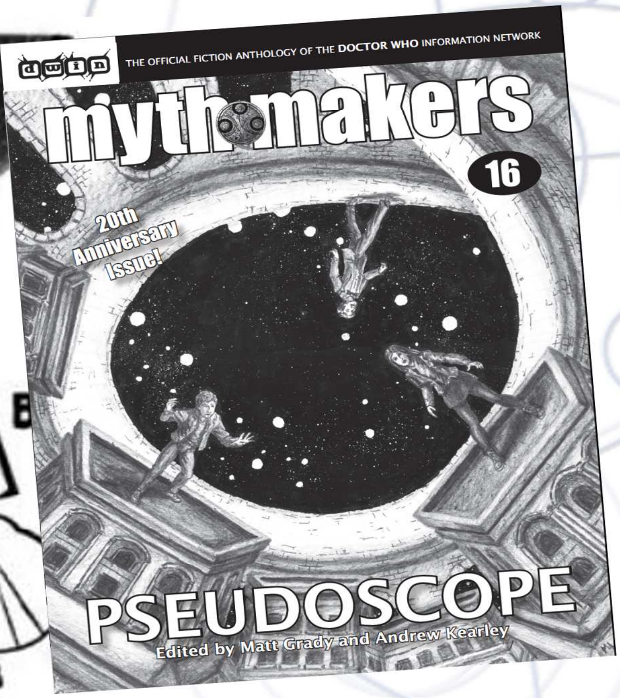
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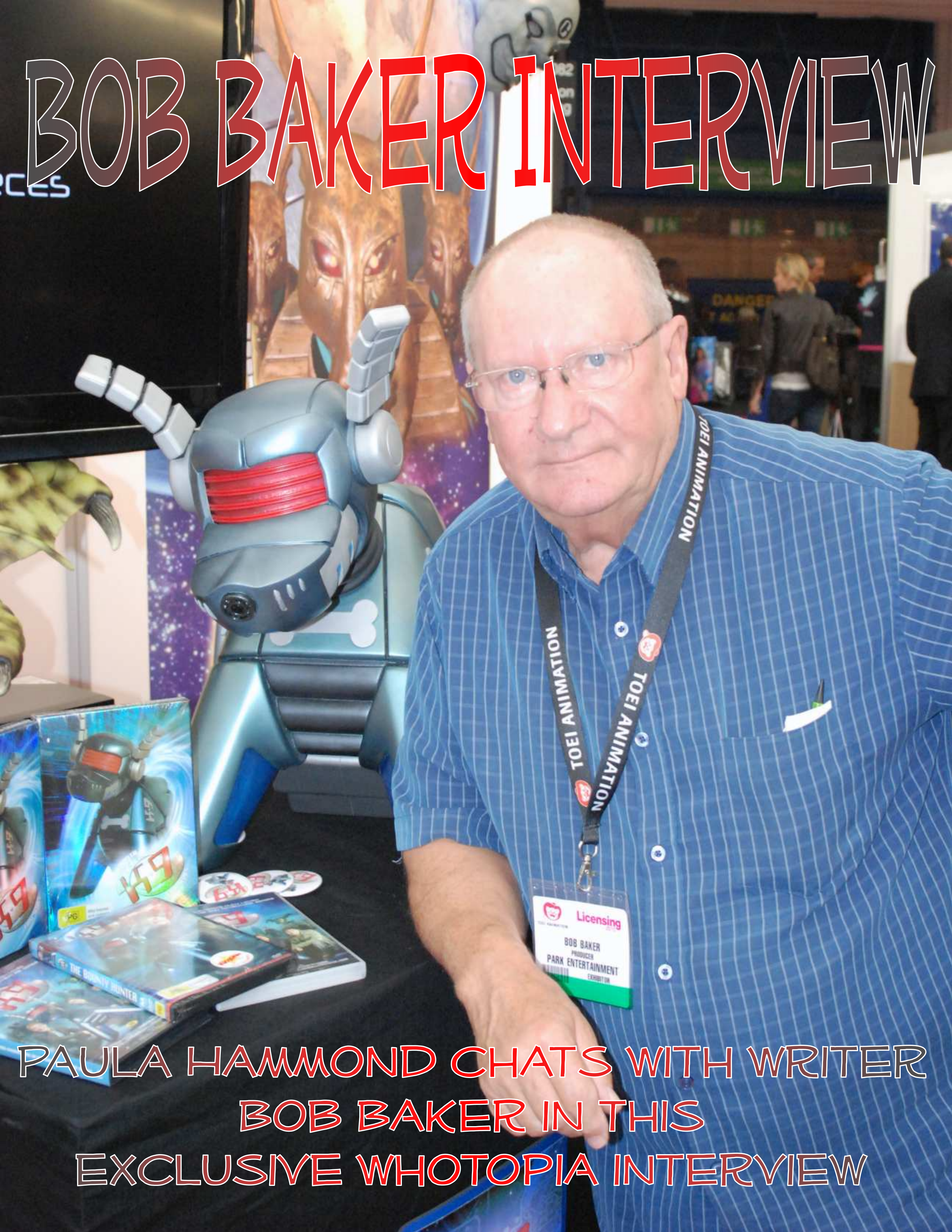
BOB BAKER INTERVIEW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K9

PAULA HAMMOND CHATS WITH WRITER
BOB BAKER IN THIS
EXCLUSIVE WHOTOPIA INTERVIEW

Adults of a certain age will remember, with a palpable thrill, children's dramas such as *Sky*, *Arthur and the Britons* and *King of the Castle* but what many of us may not have known at the time was that Bristol-born Bob Baker and writing partner, Dave Martin, created them all.

Sadly Bob's writing partner, Dave Martin, passed away in April 2007 but Bob is still very much with us and still as busy as ever. Last year, saw the UK terrestrial debut of *K-9* along with an all-new *Wallace and Gromit* science show. This year, Bob has hush-hush plans for a new animated series. But it was everyone's favourite tin terrier which he was keen to chat about when we met. In fact, since Bob and Dave created K9 back in 1977, he's remained a firm fan favourite, with regular guest spots in *Doctor Who* and the *Sarah Jane Adventures*. Bob's new show, called simply *K-9*, finally gives the Time Lord's best friend top-billing although, as Bob explained, it's been a long road.

"Paul Tamms came to see me just after I'd finished the *Wallace and Gromit* movie and said why don't we revive K9" said Bob. That was in 2005. *Doctor Who* had just returned to TV after a 16-year hiatus and interest in the project was intense. "At one time," Bob commented, "we had interest from Disney Buena Vista but they went down from a half hour show to quarter of an hour to three minute interstitials. I said what the hell are those? It was clear that the show just wouldn't work like that." Jetix Europe and the BBC were also linked to the project but eventually Bob found the backing that the show needed in Australia, where the series was produced.

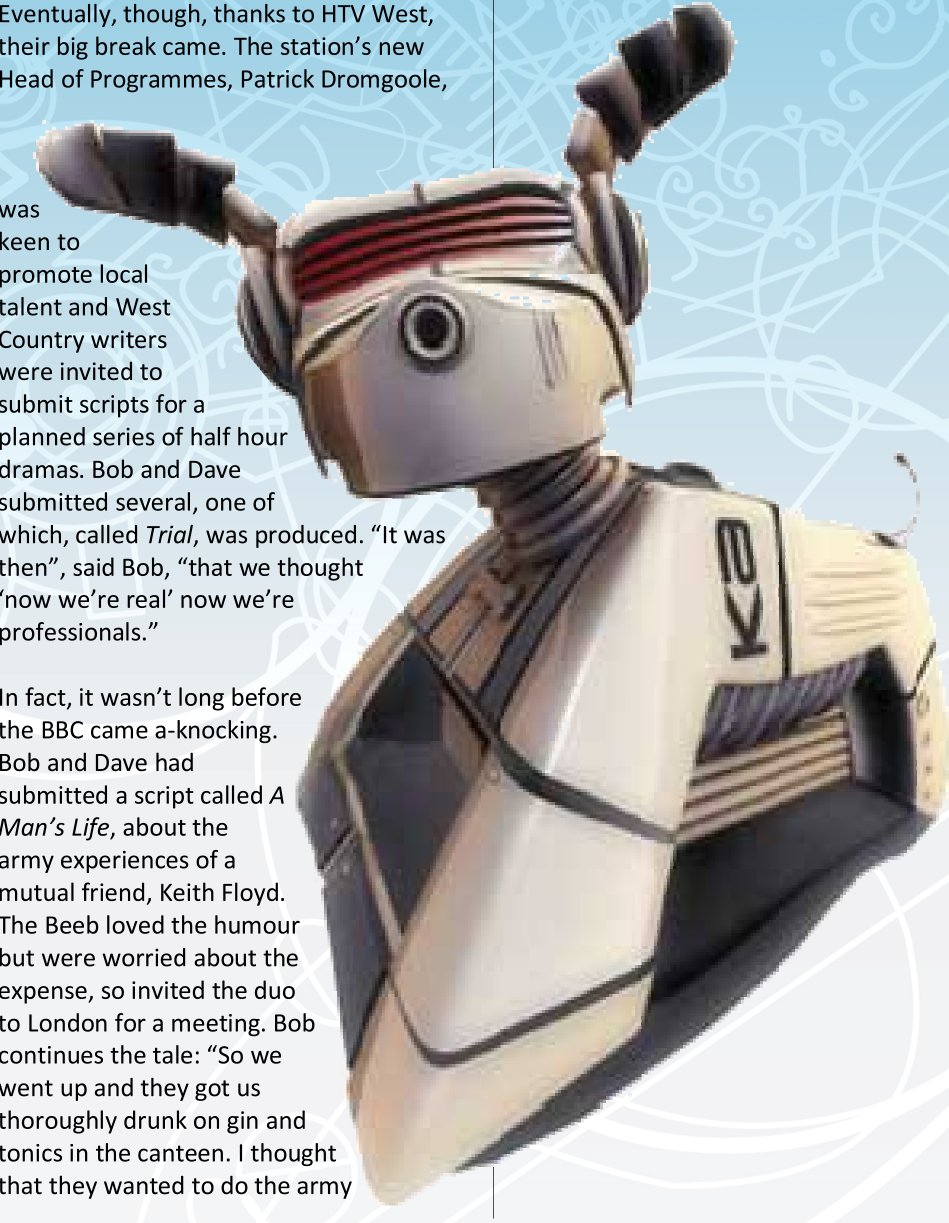
Whovians will know that Bob has had a long association with *Doctor Who*, having written nine stories for the show during the 1970s – an era that many consider to be its golden age. So what may be surprising is that, although the new series has brought back John Leeson to play the eponymous robot, the BBC wouldn't allow Bob to directly reference the wider *Who*-niverse. Despite this, the show has been a big hit. "If you like," Bob said, "just as the Doctor regenerates, the dog has regenerated. He's much more sophisticated now, which is lovely for John because in the past he was monosyllabic. Now it's his show and he gets to make some nice crisp remarks."

However, Oscar winning scripts and hit TV shows are a far cry from Bob's early days as a stonemason in Bristol. "I did a five year apprenticeship with the Bristol Co-op" Bob explained. "It was there that I learnt to be a letter cutter on gravestones so," he said with a wry smile, "I was always a writer!"

From there, Bob went to art school where he got the film bug. "I did some film, some animation and bits and pieces and… I thought well this is it, this is what I really want to do." Eventually he met Dave Martin, who was also keen to write and the duo spent the next year and a half "sending out scripts and accumulating rejection slips". Eventually, though, thanks to HTV West, their big break came. The station's new Head of Programmes, Patrick Dromgoole, was keen to promote local talent and West Country writers were invited to submit scripts for a planned series of half hour dramas. Bob and Dave submitted several, one of which, called *Trial*, was produced. "It was then", said Bob, "that we thought 'now we're real' now we're professionals."

In fact, it wasn't long before the BBC came a-knocking. Bob and Dave had submitted a script called *A Man's Life*, about the army experiences of a mutual friend, Keith Floyd. The Beeb loved the humour but were worried about the expense, so invited the duo to London for a meeting. Bob continues the tale: "So we went up and they got us thoroughly drunk on gin and tonics in the canteen. I thought that they wanted to do the army film so I was reassuring them about the cost, saying they didn't have to use tanks, they could use armoured cars, and so on. Then, they suddenly said, do you know what we do? We do *Doctor Who* and I said oh great… anyway about these tanks. Of course, they weren't interested in the army play at all. The meeting was just a pretext to see if we were the right sort of people to do *Who*."

'The Bristol Boys' as the pair were affectionately dubbed by the *Doctor Who* crew worked on the show for the next ten years, producing such cult classics as *The Hand of Fear*, *The Sontaran Experiment* and *The Claws of Axos*. This was a period of intense activity for Bob and David, with work on *Who* representing just a small part of their creative output.

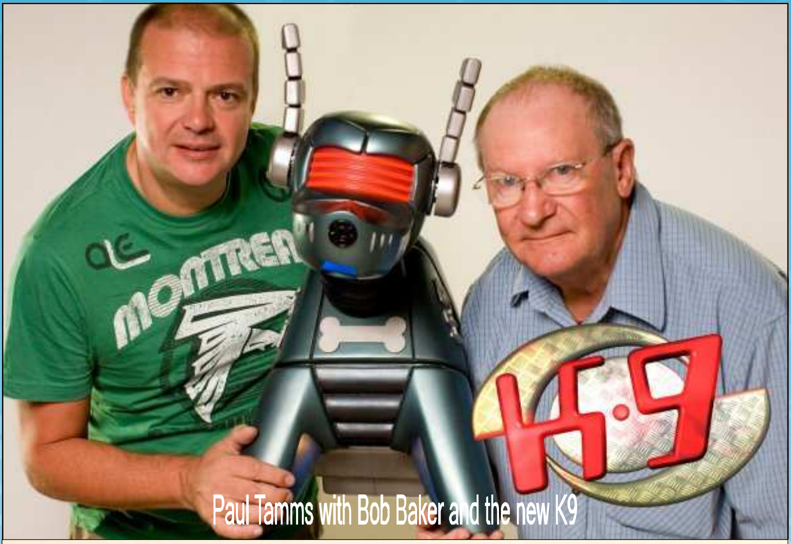


These were dramas which were never pedestrian or predictable. *Sky*, for instance, told the story of an extraterrestrial traveller who accidentally arrives on Earth during the late twentieth century. Sky's presence quickly threatens to upset the delicate balance of nature which becomes manifest in the form of the sinister, black-clad Goodchild. In comparison, *King of the Castle* was pure Kafka for kids. In an era when most British children's stories were about nice kids, having nice adventures in nice boarding schools, *King of the Castle* was daringly different. The series focussed on Roland, who lives in a dilapidated council flat with his dad and step-mum. While trying to escape from local bullies, he tumbles into a fantastical, dreamlike world. In an echo of Joseph Jacob's Arthurian tale, *Childe Rowland*, before he can return home, our modern-day Roland must triumph over the dark forces opposing him.

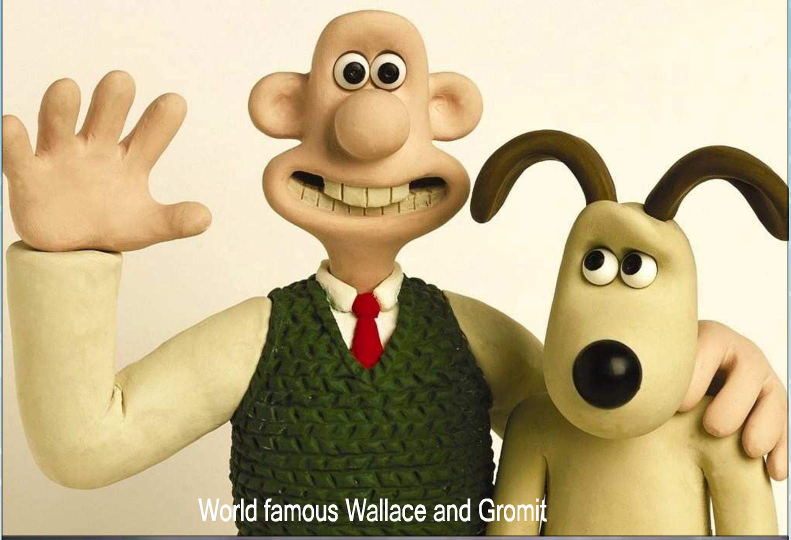
When, in the early 1980s, Dave Martin decided that he wanted to concentrate on novel writing, Bob moved to HTV. There, he worked as writer and script editor on a new, prime-time detective show, *Shoestring*. *Bergerac*, *Smuggler* and children's drama *Into the Labyrinth* were also created during this period of white-hot creativity. But there were still two more names to be added to Bob's already impressive CV – *Wallace and Gromit*.

It was after Bob got back from Czechoslovakia, where he was working on the science fiction film *Nexus*, that he received a call which introduced him to the wonderful world of Aardman Animation. "I didn't know who *Wallace and Gromit* were," Bob admitted, "so Aardman sent me a few video tapes and put Nick and I together to see if we'd get on, and we did. *The Wrong Trousers* was the result of the collaboration which, Bob says modestly, "was fairly successful." A year later, Aardman asked Bob if he'd like to "do another one… and then another one." To date the Aardman-Park-Baker partnership has notched up awards from over 25 countries along with four BAFTAs and three Oscars. The secret to their success? "Nick and I have the same sense of humour – very 1950s Beano." Indeed, work on a new animation often begins with Nick and Bob sitting down to watch an old film. British comedies are a favourite. "Will Hay, Norman Wisdom… that sort of thing… work well", said Bob, "because really *Wallace and Gromit* is frozen somewhere in the mid- to late 50s. It's a period which has a kind of golden glow for me, as it was the time I was at the Co-op as a stonemason. It was a time I really enjoyed, when I met some incredible people and I've used my experiences from that period of my life a lot in my writing."

So what's next for Bob Baker? Does he ever plan to retire? "No," he says decisively. "I can't sit around thinking maybe I'll go fishing. The only other thing I do is paint. I have a shed in the garden which has a typewriter on one side and an easel on the other side. So I often move from one to the other but I can't stop. Writing is something I'm driven to do." Which is good news for sci-fi fans everywhere.



Paul Tamms with Bob Baker and the new K9


World famous Wallace and Gromit

A scene from the HTV series "Sky"

It was after Bob got back from Czechoslovakia, where he was working on the science fiction film Nexus, that he received a call which introduced him to the wonderful world of Aardman Animation.

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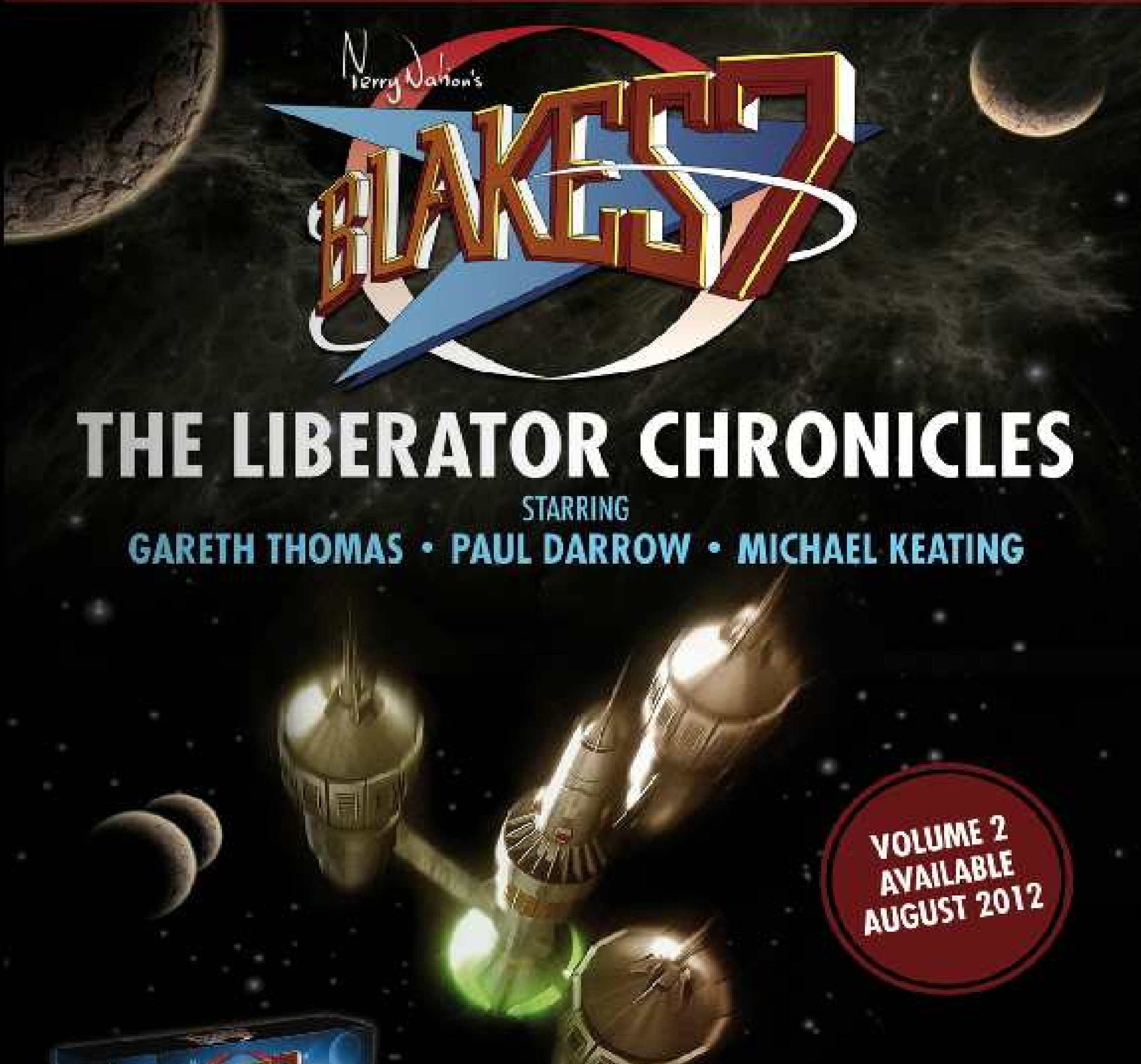
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DALEK'S ADVOCATE

IN DEFENCE OF TIME FLIGHT

It is often said that the road less traveled in any journey might be the hardest, the most diverse and at times perhaps a bit more fun as well. Sometimes this can prove to be true in our entertainment choices as well, as a band in the music biz who takes a risk on a new musical direction may be loved or hated for such a choice, or an actor might be a hit in a drama after years of doing comedy. It is a fact, then, of sorts that the art of daring to be different makes an impact, be it positive or negative.

Doctor Who is no stranger to the road less traveled. At its very core the concept of the TARDIS and the nature of the Doctor's biological attributes, set it apart from most other shows in the genre of science fiction. Its main plot device of travel anywhere in time and space also gives the opportunity to explore other less traveled paths in storytelling, sometimes with mixed results.

Most would say that *Time-Flight* was one such direction of the negative variety, a story many call disjointed, full of plot holes and some very awful special effects and sets. They will tell you that at the end of the brilliant Season Nineteen was one of the worst *Doctor Who* episodes of the Peter Davison era, if not the 1980s. If you can discuss it with a fellow *Doctor Who* fan without someone mentioning how crap the Plasmatons look, or someone asking why the Master was disguised as an Arabian wizard with bad skin, then your conversation was an aberration, not the norm.

But in between all the turbulence, *Time-Flight* was not the fiery crash some would make it out to be. It did indeed have its bad moments and head-scratching plot elements, but it also made excellent use of location shooting and management, with securing permission to film at Heathrow and on board Concorde, helping to make it a fun, enjoyable end to a season that had delighted and shocked us with a tale about a plane hijacking slightly outside the kind we are used to.

I suppose it also rates a bit more highly with me than with others due to a healthy dose of nostalgia. I first saw this when I was probably about five years old or so, and back then *Doctor Who* was fun and entertaining no matter what plot hole or wobbly set turned up. This means that I am, admittedly, still looking at *Time-Flight* through young eyes, but I don't think the Doctor himself would have any problem with that; kids always see a bit clearer then adults anyway, and I would also have the imagination and mindset of the demographic this series has always held so dear.

Openings are, of course, always an important aspect to consider, and what could be better than a luxury jet just vanishing from the blue skies it occupied just a moment ago. You are drawn in, wanting to know how in the world that could have happened. It was a simple effect, the same one the TARDIS had been using since 1963, but it looked so odd and extraordinary to see a plane just vanish into thin air.

The concept of a plane, or another mode of transport such as a train, taken over is certainly not unique, but it was relevant at the time, when real flights were hijacked with real people on board, giving an added sense of weight to the proceedings.

Another positive that soon becomes apparent is that this is a direct continuation from the previous story, *Earthshock*, where former TARDIS crew member Adric had died trying to battle the Cybermen. This was handled tremendously with a great little scene about how the TARDIS' time travel ability could never be used to change events such as Adric's death, an idea that had relevance to series continuity that was revisited as recently as *The Waters of Mars* in 2009.

Continuity was a big factor in the first couple seasons of John Nathan Turner's run as producer of *Doctor Who*, and at times it worked to perfection, like the humorous irony of the TARDIS ending up at Heathrow Airport while trying to reach the Great Exhibition, as Heathrow was a destination the TARDIS had been trying to reach almost the entire season without any success.

Supporting characters were well done this time around too, with the skepticism of the Concorde crew about the Doctor's sanity and credibility, and Professor Hayter being the ultimate non-believer and stubborn human. The role is clichéd to be sure, and done more then a few times in *Doctor Who*'s long run, but it is also a cliché in that special way the programme has of doing what it does best. It works because it's *Doctor Who* and that's what happens. People doubt the Doctor until it is proven to them that he is being completely serious and it is in their best interest to put trust in him.

Much like the Daleks never just shooting the Doctor and killing him stone dead, the Doctor facing dumbfounded and negative locals has always been a part of the show that was both silly and serious at the same time.

What is nonsensical is why in the universe the Master would feel the need to play dress-up as Kalid, but let's be honest here, the Master has a habit of pretty strange behavior and I think we could all dream up numerous reasons as to why he is in disguise, other then to serve as a decent cliffhanger to Part Two.
But the good bit about this, is the confrontation between the pair while the Master is still in disguise. This is actually in my mind one of Davison's better confrontations, and it should not be ignored because the story it happens to be in is not very popular. Certainly *Time-flight* is a stronger adventure for having the scene.

Turning back to the nostalgia angle reminds me that I also loved this story for the amount of scenes filmed in the TARDIS, and all the various take-offs and landings from both the Doctor's and the Master's machines. The Master even put his chameleon circuit to use as well, adding to the TARDIS fest we are served up in this story.

Tegan, the Fifth Doctor & Nyssa

The Doctor confronts the Master

Kalid takes the Doctor into his lair

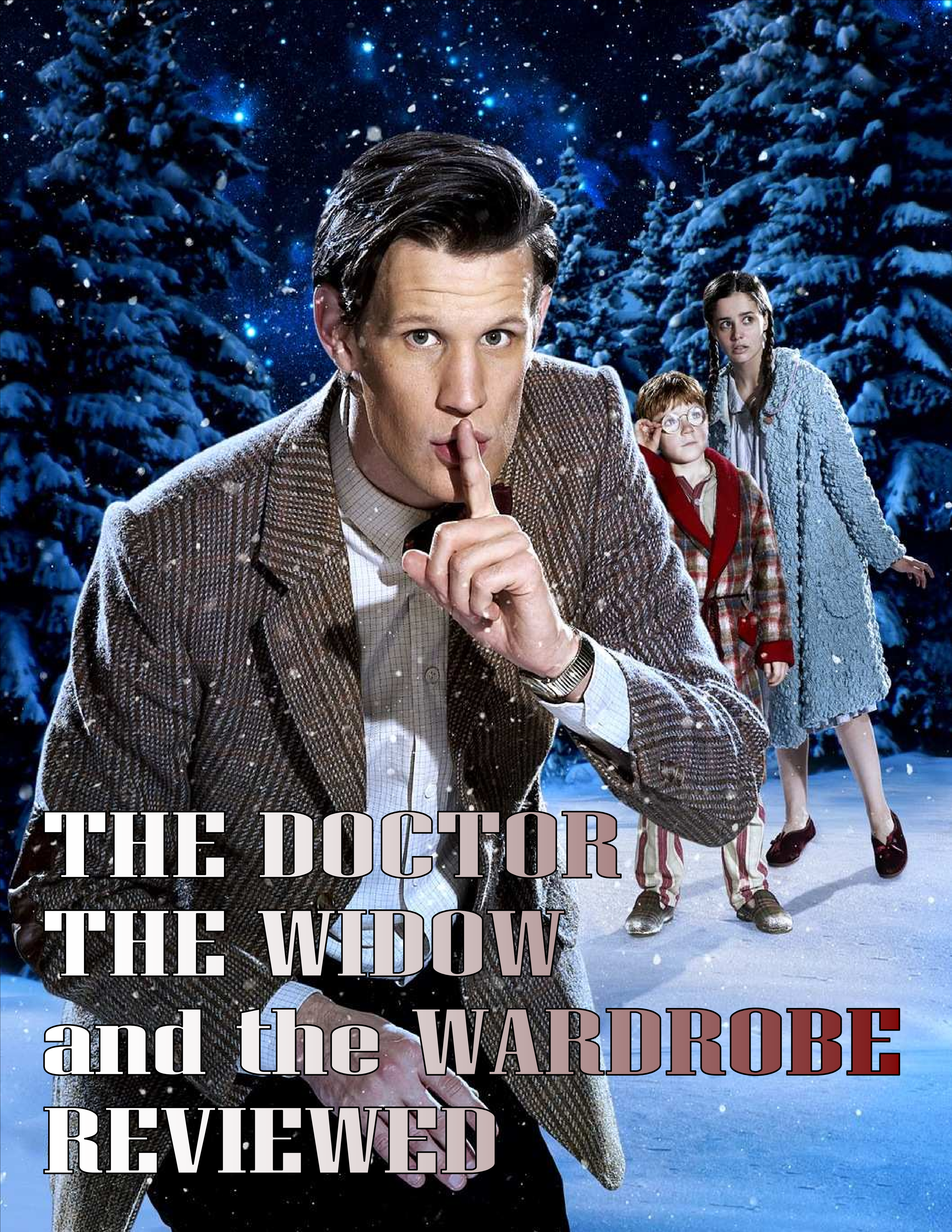
At the time, I loved any glimpse of the TARDIS I could get from the William Hartnell era to Davison, and I even made cassette tapes of the various TARDIS sounds to use when I built my own 'TARDIS Console' on our kitchen table out of old Atari keyboards and various things with buttons, switches and levers.

Time-Flight was a great source for these sound effects and for big long glimpses of the console room, which at the time used to be my favorite part of the show not involving Daleks or Cybermen or the Doctor arguing with Tegan. It is this kind of warm, fuzzy feeling that *Time-Flight* brings to me, despite not being a flawless script or concept.

Fitting a whole race of people into a tiny sarcophagus was of course pretty interesting at the time too, as was the fact that such a race would war within itself between the good and the evil. It's odd that the never-ending battle between the dark and the light was not explored as much as it could have been, with the Doctor and the Master being perfect mirrors for the black and white Xeraphin.

It would seem that, in the end, not everybody was happy with the flight when they disembarked along with Tegan at Heathrow, but I thought that although there were some bumps and even some nasty weather to fly through, the journey as a whole was actually quite smooth and enjoyable. I would definitely not say *Time-Flight* is as rich as the champagne and caviar you might get up in first class, but it also certainly was not as bad as the peanuts and warm cola that you might find back in the coach.

| Thomas Willam Spychalski

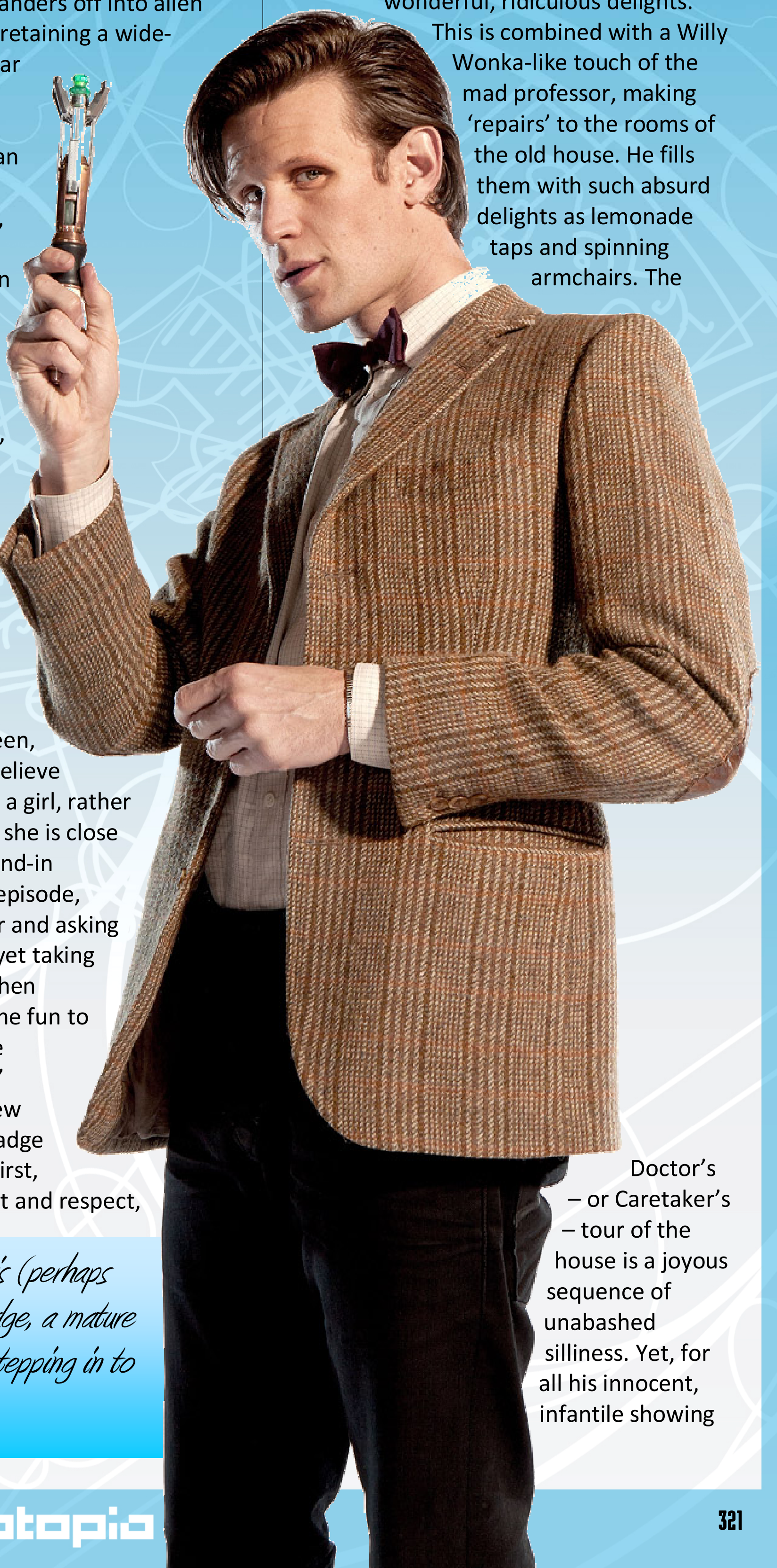


THE DOCTOR THE WIDOW and the WARDROBE REVIEWED

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe has been part of the make-up of *Doctor Who* since its very beginnings. The TARDIS is, essentially, a magical doorway to other worlds, although its police box disguise has dated in a way that the earlier wardrobe never has. *The Doctor, the Widow and the Wardrobe* is not without precedent. Beyond its title, though, and the substitute wardrobes (both the TARDIS and the mysterious Christmas present), is there much to link it to the children's classic? There's the wartime setting, with the family evacuated to the country; there's the otherworldly forest beneath a blanket of snow; and once again, a ratio of two male to two female adventurers. Beyond that, there's not a great similarity between the two. In spite of the Christmas setting, any Christian allegory is (perhaps thankfully) wholly missing. The true savior of this story is Madge, a mature female, not a powerful masculine hero with a mane of hair, stepping in to help the mortals (read that either as Aslan or the Doctor, as you wish). Maybe there's more Narnia to the episode than I realized – I'm no expert – but it was a primarily visual tribute, as opposed to last year's *A Christmas Carol*, which took more from its source material.

However, the two episodes have something in common; they both begin with a storming spaceship sequence that almost leads to disaster, and provides a strong juxtaposition to the wintry, fairytale mood of the main story. The visual effects of the Doctor's escape from the ship provide a striking opening, although it does feel as if we've just missed an adventure. The Doctor's landing on Earth is hard to swallow, but it provides a beautiful introduction for this episode's guest heroine. Madge is a strong, intelligent, independent and resourceful woman, yet still seems at home in the late-1930s and early-1940s. In the hands of a less skilled writer and a poorer actor, Madge could easily have been over-the-top, a modern heroine in period dress. Claire Skinner is excellent in the role, bringing to life a strong, likeable character; she carries much of the episode, both away from the Doctor and in Matt Smith's dominating presence.

The two young Arwells both impress. Maurice Cole manages to make Cyril a brave, adventurous little boy, who finds bombing raids exciting and wanders off into alien worlds alone, while retaining a wide-eyed wonder and fear at his new surroundings. Cole copes admirably in an episode full of well-known, adult actors, never dropping the character even when he is not at the centre of a scene. Holly Earl is very good as older sister Lily, giving a mature, confident performance that still has a measure of that vital innocence and wonder. However, it's perhaps too mature a performance. Earl is nineteen, not fourteen, and it's difficult to believe that we're watching a girl, rather than a woman. Still, she is close to perfect as the stand-in companion for this episode, following the Doctor and asking the right questions yet taking some control just when needed. There's some fun to be had watching the different characters' reactions to their new Caretaker. While Madge shows suspicion at first, developing into trust and respect, Lily and Cyril are immediately won over, but watch; while Cyril is just watching the gadgets and gizmos, Lily can't take her eyes off the handsome stranger.



Matt Smith is on top form as the Doctor, here presented at his most childlike. He exhibits a child's view of the world, made up of wishes and Christmas cheer and wonderful, ridiculous delights. This is combined with a Willy Wonka-like touch of the mad professor, making 'repairs' to the rooms of the old house. He fills them with such absurd delights as lemonade taps and spinning armchairs. The Doctor's – or Caretaker's – tour of the house is a joyous sequence of unabashed silliness. Yet, for all his innocent, infantile showing

> *"In spite of the Christmas setting, any Christian allegory is (perhaps thankfully) wholly missing. The true savior of this story is Madge, a mature female, not a powerful masculine hero with a mane of hair, stepping in to help the mortals. . ."*

off, the Doctor remains an ancient figure, with Smith still managing to instill the occasional moment with a real sense of age and depth. Perhaps the catchphrase thing has gone a little too far, though. I'll stand for 'sciencey-wiencey,' but 'humany-wumany' is a bit much.

> *"Matt Smith is on top form as the Doctor, here presented at his most childlike. He exhibits a child's view of the world, made up of wishes and Christmas cheer and wonderful, ridiculous delights."*

We have to question just what the Doctor thinks he's doing here. Providing an inter-dimensional trip to an alien planet for a young family is hardly a responsible action, even by his standards; leaving the present in front of the tree is just asking for trouble. Still, the box opening into a snowy wilderness is a beautiful visual, just one of many. We're soon treated to a stunning array of fantasy elements. Trees that grow their own baubles and wear shining stars on their tops are perhaps the most wonderful *Doctor Who* take on a Christmas cliché yet. The wooden King and Queen are highly effective creations; not scary, by any means, but powerful, impressive and domineering. It's also wonderfully subversive writing by Moffat; while we hack down trees so that we can stick them in our living rooms, the Doctor reminds us that "of course it's alive, it's a tree." Not many Christmas programmes make us reconsider the morality of our decorations.

What the episode lacks however is a genuine sense of threat or peril. The acid rain attack provides some, but is never immediate or visceral enough to get us on the edge of our seat. What this story really needs is a straightforward villain; a White Witch. The team of foresters from Androzani Major (who else cheered at that reference?) provides something in the way of villainy, but ultimately they're comedic characters, not there to pose a threat, and the three characters with their roving juggernaut seem very out of place in this story. The juxtaposition of the fantasy world and the science-fiction invasion isn't taken far enough to succeed, instead becoming little more than a strange diversion.

Perhaps this is missing the point. This is a different type of episode, one where it's love and family that save the day, not bloodshed and destruction. It seems strange that the Doctor doesn't even try to prevent the Androzani crew from annihilating the forest, but having it go ahead allows Madge to save the trees herself. The strong-weak/female-male analogy is both rather obvious and hugely simplistic, but nevertheless represents the episode's central theme of motherhood. At the end of it all, a world is saved not by firepower or a carefully timed explosion, but by peacefully shepherding a race to a new home. It's all good, emotionally reaffirming stuff.

The final few scenes of the episode bring it dangerously close to corny sentimentality; some might say it crosses right over. Would it have been better for Reg Arwell to have stayed dead, to make Madge's effort to hold things together for Christmas all the more worthwhile? Or was the predictable yet heart-warming return the way to go? I think I'm in the latter camp. A Christmas episode calls for a happy ending, and this time we got two. After the Arwells are reunited, the Doctor is persuaded to go look up the Ponds. It's a very pleasant, not-quite-surprise to see Amy and Rory, like a couple of old friends you see just once a year at Christmas, out of the blue but half-expected. Who cried when the Doctor was told that he always had a place set?

Ultimately, *The Doctor, the Widow and the Wardrobe* feels just right for Christmas day. It features neither a widow nor a wardrobe, but not to worry. It combines so many elements of hazy Christmas memories, from snow-dusted forests to sparkling stars on tree tops, from snatches of war films to inexplicable wishes, that it ends up as something rather magical.

| Daniel Tessier

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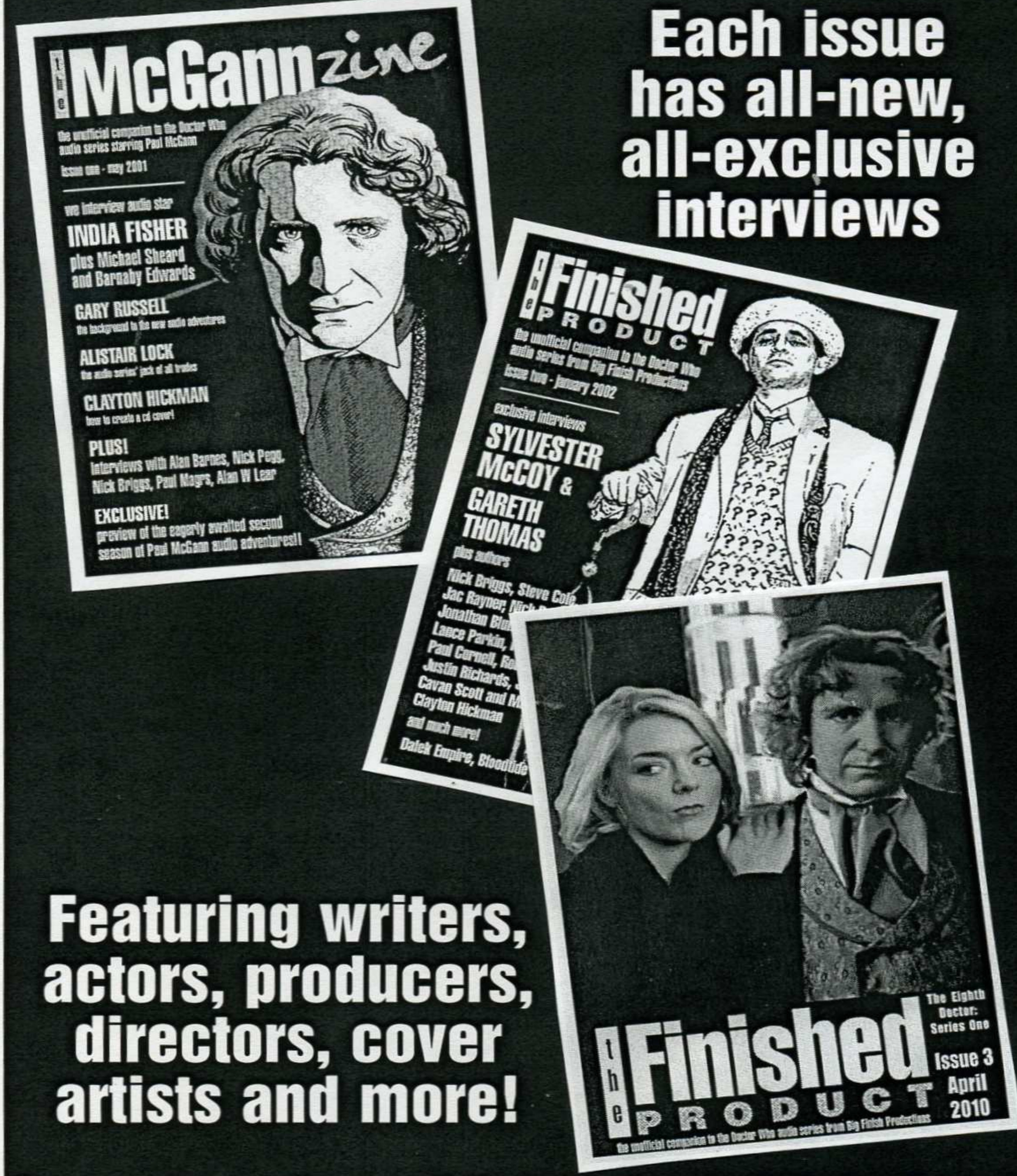

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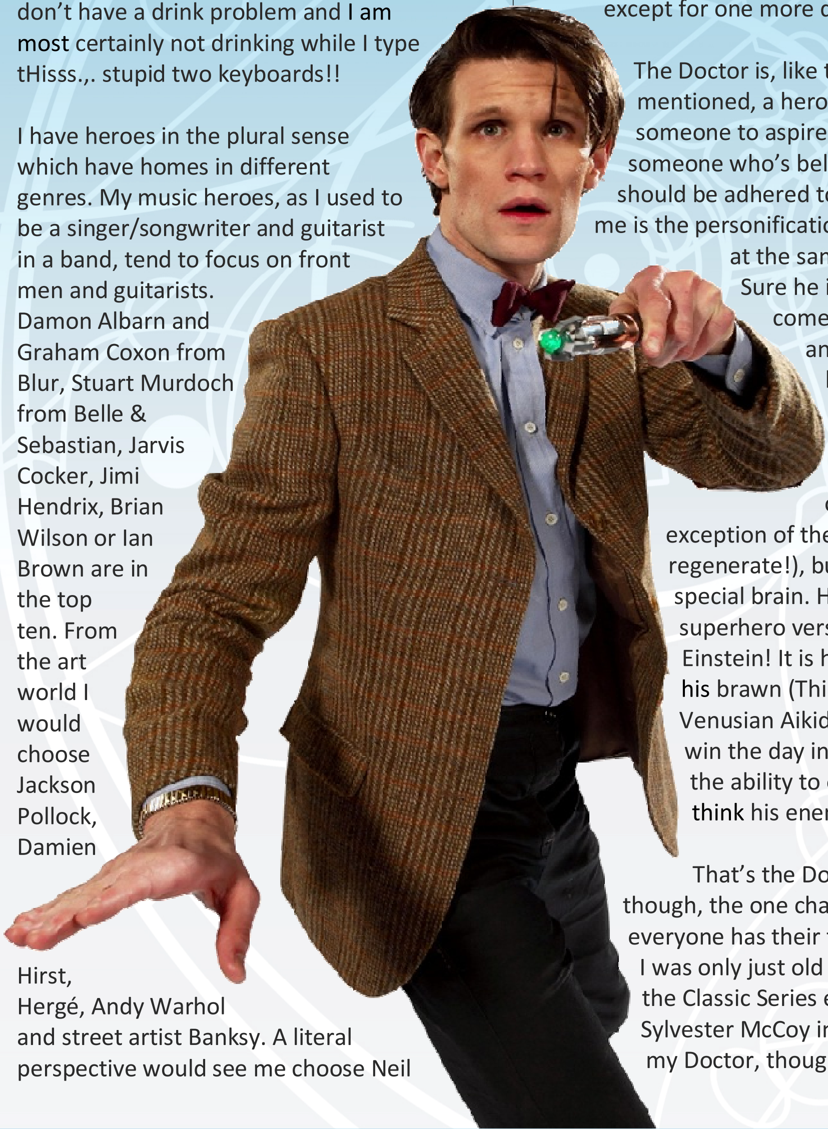
GRANT BULL

whOlife

~~JOHN SMITH~~... MATT SMITH

I always tread carefully around the hero tag as I do the genius one, though when I have had a few drinks I chuck them around like those free newspapers you get at the train station. In my drink-infused state, my argument for a good song or band will be the genius lyrics or the genius musical structure or guitar solo. People will become heroes through things they say or how they act, but in the soberness of the morning I am less liberal. Oh, just to clarify, I don't have a drink problem and I am most certainly not drinking while I type tHisss.,. stupid two keyboards!!



I have heroes in the plural sense which have homes in different genres. My music heroes, as I used to be a singer/songwriter and guitarist in a band, tend to focus on front men and guitarists. Damon Albarn and Graham Coxon from Blur, Stuart Murdoch from Belle & Sebastian, Jarvis Cocker, Jimi Hendrix, Brian Wilson or Ian Brown are in the top ten. From the art world I would choose Jackson Pollock, Damien Hirst, Hergé, Andy Warhol and street artist Banksy. A literal perspective would see me choose Neil Gaiman, Terry Pratchett, Lewis Carroll and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Is it weird to say fictional characters are heroes too? Obviously I think not as I list the likes of Tintin, He-Man, the Hamburglar and the Doctor as mine. There we have it at last, the *Doctor Who* connection! Sorry, but I felt the above pre-amble/ramble necessary. Apologies to those I've lost or frustrated with what seemed like a list of 'Grant likes...' but here we go *Doctor Who*, no more distractions... well except for one more drink!!

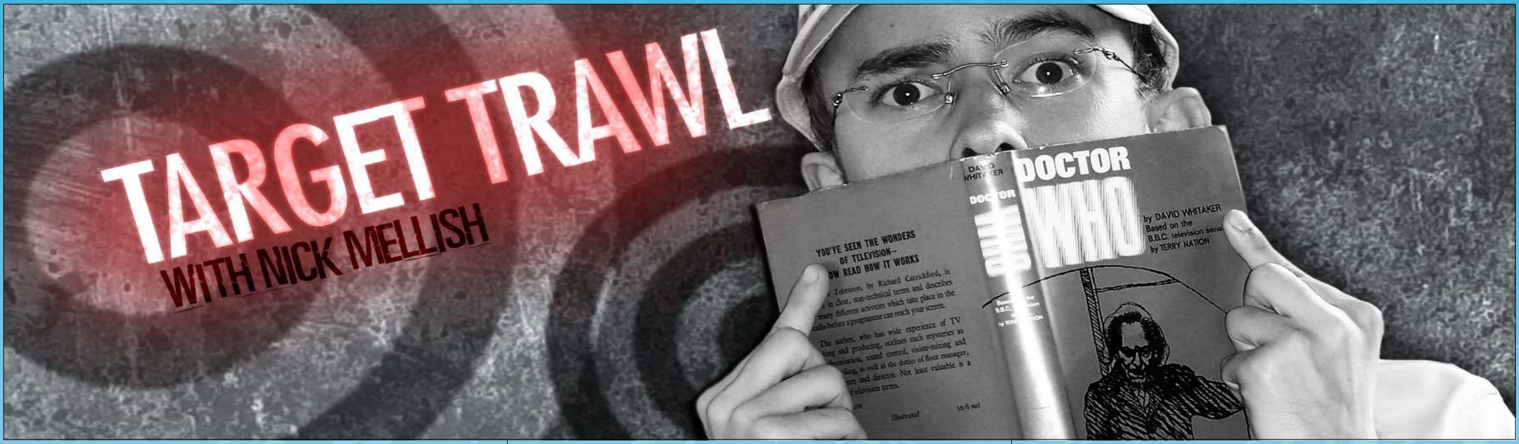
The Doctor is, like the real people I mentioned, a hero, a genius, someone to aspire to be like; someone who's beliefs and ways should be adhered to. The Doctor to me is the personification of a hero and at the same time a genius. Sure he is alien and he comes from Gallifrey and has two hearts, but this aside he is a man with no special powers (with the obvious exception of the ability to regenerate!), but instead a very special brain. He is like the superhero version of Albert Einstein! It is his brain and not his brawn (Third Doctor and Venusian Aikido aside!) that win the day in most scenarios, the ability to outwit and out-think his enemies.

That's the Doctor in general though, the one character. However, everyone has their favourite Doctor. I was only just old enough to catch the Classic Series end with Sylvester McCoy in the lead; he was my Doctor, though for me my favourite Doctor will always be Tom Baker. From *Robot* to *Logopolis*, Tom simply is *The* Doctor. There is so much of him in the role that at times it's hard to define who is who. He devoted his life to the role and continues to delight fans to this day with his piercing eyes, wicked smile and that booming voice. Tom Baker is the Doctor. But someone else is staking a claim to eternal Doctorship (I just made a new word!)...

Matt Smith... Yes, here we have it at last the Matt Smith connection of these mumblings! Ever since I saw Matt on that *Doctor Who Confidential* I was intrigued. The way he conducted himself, the way he used his hands so much to animate the words he was speaking. His performance in *The Eleventh Hour* (2010) I have watched over and over again, and I think it's fair to say it is the most convincing performance in the lead role I have seen. Every time I watch it, I find it hard not to punch the air as he steps through the projection of the past Doctors and confronts the Atraxi. I have said the above before, in a different shower of affection to Matt and his Doctor, but now we are two seasons and a Christmas Special in! His mannerisms haven't worn off yet; I'm not tired of his bumbling, haphazard ways. On the contrary, I want more. I love the way he turns on his foot and spins into a different direction, the way he has nicknames for Amy, Rory etc. The whole alien element is still there and one hopes it doesn't go away as it didn't with Tom. Like Tom, there is a large portion of Matt in his Doctor. Watching interviews with Matt he simply is the Doctor but in normal clothes! I guess the thing with David Tennant was the Scottish accent in 'real life', but Matt is Matt and Matt is the Doctor!!

So, to finish with what I began with... Tom Baker = Hero, Matt Smith = Genius.

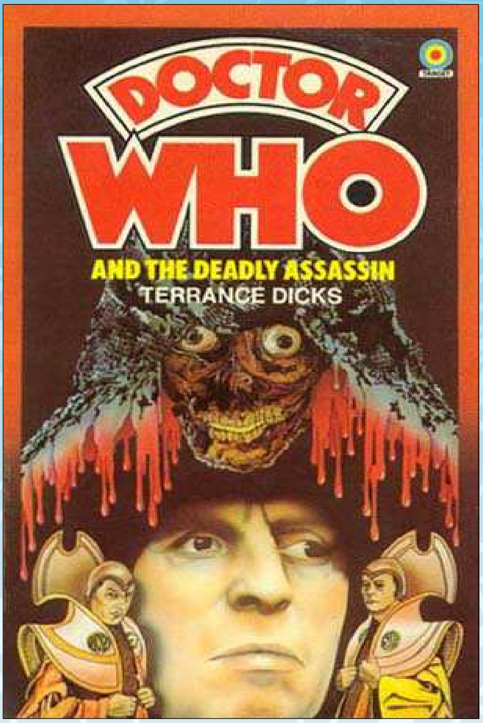
| Grant Bull


TARGET TRAWL
WITH NICK MELLISH
DOCTOR WHO
by DAVID WHITAKER
Based on the B.B.C. television serial by TERRY NATION
YOU'VE SEEN THE WONDERS OF TELEVISION—NOW READ HOW IT WORKS

Making the brilliant average.

There is an oft-stated 'fact' about the Target novelizations: that they hit a real low-point in the middle. The school of thought goes that Terrance Dicks was churning them out at such a rate that the quality really dips and they become little more than scripts with camera directions replaced by "she said" and "they exited the room".

I'm sorry to say that this isn't going to be a very positive column this issue as I found this to be very much the case. It's a shame. Without meaning to sound cocky or complacent, I normally find this column fairly easy to write. It's not because I'm a fabulous writer or anything close, but because the novelizations are a joy to read and so writing about them is a wholly pleasant experience. Not so much this time around; just as I haven't found much flair within the books I've just read, writing this article is taking me longer than it should since, frankly, I'm struggling. How does one write an article that neither heaps praise upon a series of books, nor slate them through and through either? Not with any particular ease, that's how.



> **"How can it be, then, that reading these novelizations did largely nothing for me? Something was amiss."**

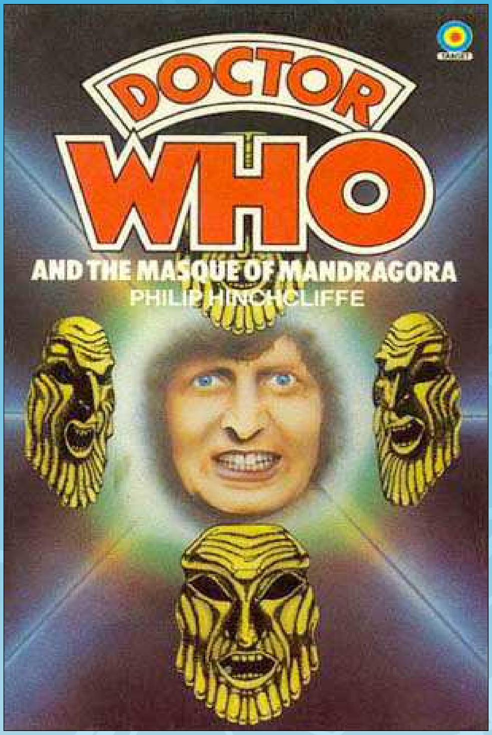
Certainly, when I started to write this in much the same way I have written every one of these columns in the past, I struggled. This shouldn't be an issue, I thought, looking at the novelizations in front of me: *The Deadly Assassin*, *The Talons of Weng-Chiang* and *The Masque of Mandragora*. Whilst I can largely miss *Mandragora* with little upset (it's okay, but nothing amazing), the other two stories are brilliant in my eyes. How can it be, then, that reading these novelizations did largely nothing for me? Something was amiss.

So, what I'm doing this time around is something a little different. I'm going to be looking at all three novelizations at once, rather than split them up as I usually do, and thinking about just why they fell flat for me. (I hope you don't mind this indulgence, but it was either that or three very similar-looking reviews, one after the other!)

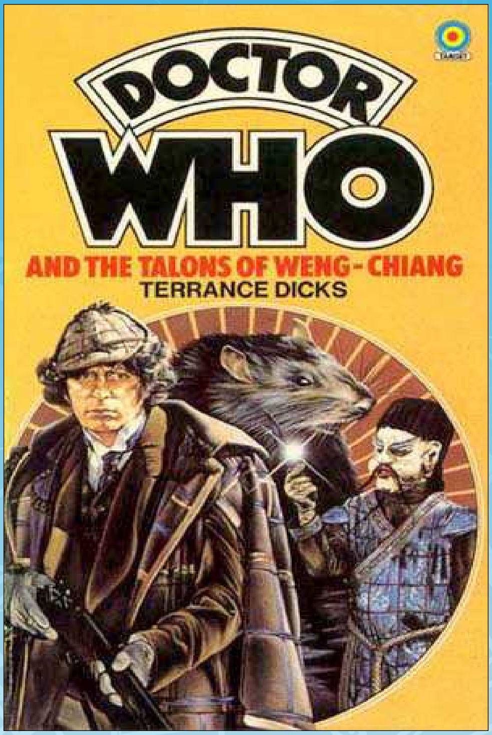
I've already mentioned how highly I regard *The Deadly Assassin* and *The Talons of Weng-Chiang*. I'm not saying that they're stories without issues, but I love them all the same. Okay, so the very ending of *Assassin* feels a little rushed (the Master nearly breaks the Universe, but then falls down a hole and... well, and that's it) and most of Part Three is padding, but it's so imaginatively and beautifully done that it doesn't matter at all. The issues with *Weng-Chiang* are perhaps more pressing, with some pretty dubious fake-Chinese make-up employed on-screen. Maybe more notable for me whilst reading the novelization, though, was how low on women the story is. We have Leela, whose role is largely to go against that which was expected of Victorian women (and very well done it is, too), but what about beyond that? The only women we get are sacrifices, and it's never stated that only women will be suitable for Greel's machine.

I'm not citing this as a criticism, I should add; it's more something which really sprang to mind whilst reading the novelization, and I think it's a brilliantly subtle play on Robert Holmes's part. You need people taken away, people that won't be missed... so, you go for the women because their value in Victorian society is so limited. It's a nasty point, but a telling one.

Anyway, I'm straying. Like I said, they are largely flawless stories, and so surely they should be enjoyable reads? Well, yes, they are on the whole as the stories themselves are so strong, but the prose... oh, the prose. You can tell that Terrance Dicks is hitting a wall of sorts at the time of writing these.



"Look ma. I can read three books at once!"
DOCTOR
WHO
DOCTOR WHO



> ***"I was expecting something better than mostly average. Sadly, that wasn't the case. What I got matched it."***

Gone is the flair we had in something like *The Three Doctors* or *Terror of the Autons*, or even of something as recent as *The Dalek Invasion of Earth*. Instead, we really do get the 'He walked over there and then said this dialogue'-style writing. Quite simply, it's a bit lazy. That doesn't feel especially fair on poor Dicks: heck, he was busy writing so many of these novelizations that he didn't have the time to be lazy! It's more that it's a real shame; these are two stories which deserve a better treatment than that which they get.

Weng-Chiang definitely steps things up a gear and is the better of the two novelizations, but so much of its atmosphere comes straight from Holmes's pen. There's a bit more colour in Dicks' prose, a dash more description, but it's fairly limited stuff. Perhaps I'm being unfair or unkind. Perhaps it's better than that and I was just coloured by the drab affair that was *Assassin*, but I'm not convinced. I've read bad books followed by masterpieces; I think I just hit two duds.

I can forgive Dicks though. Like I've said already, he was writing so many of these so quickly that I think a drop in quality is to be expected. I wasn't expecting this to be the case for Philip Hinchcliffe though. Now, I've already stated that I'm not the greatest fan of *Mandragora* but I wasn't expecting the novelization to be quite so... well, dull. There's no spark to Hinchcliffe's writing here that I could detect; a few bits of "the Doctor was acting very mysterious and Time Lord-ish" does not a good read make. I've enjoyed the novelizations of *Pyramids of Mars* and *The Brain of Morbius*, two stories I don't care for much in their on-screen guises, so I was expecting something better than mostly average. Sadly, that wasn't the case. What I got matched it. For a book only 120-odd pages long, it took me an absolute bloody age to read, such was the level to which I disliked it. It was just an exceptionally boring read, and it hurts me to say that. I do not like disliking things; I am not a "love to hate" person. It hurts, then, to write that this novelization was possibly my least favourite of them all so far. It did absolutely nothing with absolute ease, and it should have been far better. Hinchcliffe's written better before, and whilst I'm not the biggest fan of Louis Marks' script as it was shot on-screen, it's about ten times better than what we get here in print. A real disappointment, and tellingly, it's for the same reason as Dicks' two books this time were: it adds nothing, rendering something good into something only all right. It's quite a skill perhaps, but it's one I'd rather not be reading.

> ***"The Master nearly breaks the Universe, but then falls down a hole and... well, and that's it."***

So, here we are then: another three books down, plenty to go, and the knowledge that we'll probably have a whole lot more average efforts waiting to be read. It's not an especially pleasant place to be, but I have hope. I have faith in good prose surprising me, in good stories winning through average book-writing, in other authors pulling off something quite special. Let's just hope my faith isn't misplaced...

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THE STORIES THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

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THE TOM BAKER ERA

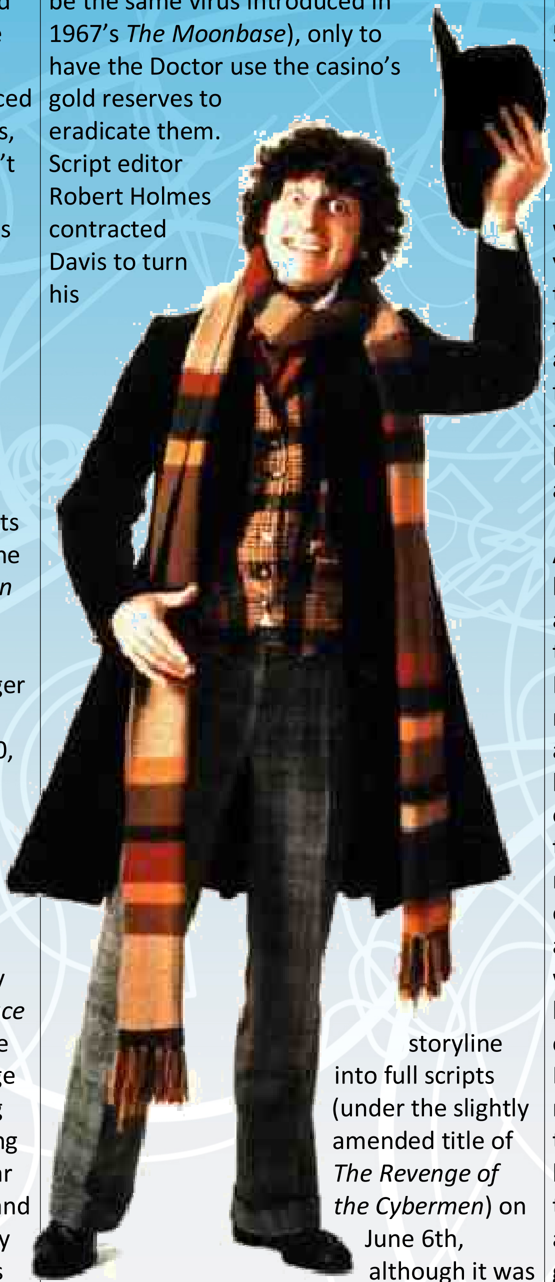
One of the most popular eras of the original *Doctor Who* series was the seven seasons that Tom Baker portrayed the Doctor. It was during this time that the original series peaked in popularity partially due to the portrayal of the main character by Baker. For seven seasons, the production team produced a multitude of stories that would attain classic story status and success. The most amazing thing during this time was that although the production team produced numerous popular and quality productions, it was still amazing how many stories didn't make the small screen. In part four of our continuing series we examine those stories that never made it beyond initial planning stages during the era.

Season Twelve

Prior to Baker being cast as the Doctor in mid-1974, script editor Robert Holmes began to seek out stories for the Fourth Doctor's first season. One of the first scripts to be submitted and accepted as part of the upcoming season twelve was *Space Station* by Christopher Langley. Set on a space station in the far-future, the Earth has become inhabitable and humanity no longer lives on the planet. The storyline for this adventure was submitted on December 30, 1973 and was officially commissioned on January 24, 1974. It was agreed by all that the upcoming twelfth season would largely revolve around this story with *Revenge of the Cybermen* designed to use the same sets and *The Sontaran Experiment* intended to continue the story of Earth's abandonment by humanity. *Space Station* and *The Sontaran Experiment* were also slotted to be made as part of one large production block with both stories sharing the same director and crew. While working on the season, around May it became clear that Langley's scripts were unacceptable and the decision was made to replace the story with *The Ark in Space*. Langley's story was officially dropped on June 17, 1974.

Around the same time as *Space Station*, former script-editor Gerry Davis submitted the story outline for *The Return of the Cybermen* which had been commissioned May 9, 1974 by out-going producer Barry Letts. In Davis' original storyline, the space station featured in Langley's story would now be operating as a casino. The Cybermen would be using their small, robotic Cybermats to spread a plague, (intended to be the same virus introduced in 1967's *The Moonbase*), only to have the Doctor use the casino's gold reserves to eradicate them.

Script editor Robert Holmes contracted Davis to turn his storyline into full scripts (under the slightly amended title of *The Revenge of the Cybermen*) on June 6th, although it was agreed that the idea of portraying the space station as a casino would be dropped. Around the same time, Langley's scripts were discarded; the Cyberman serial would now be acting as a sequel to *The Ark In Space* by John Lucarotti.



When Davis had begun work on the scripts, it wasn't known how the new Doctor would be portrayed. As a result, Davis elected to essentially write the character in the vein of Patrick Troughton's Second Doctor, including the use of such signature elements as his 500-year diary. Over the next several weeks, Holmes was in frequent contact with Davis requesting various changes to the scripts. However, both Holmes and new producer Philip Hinchcliffe were concerned throughout the writing process that Davis was pitching his scripts at an audience younger than *Doctor Who* was now targeting. Hinchcliffe was also concerned that Sarah was largely extraneous to the action, and that Harry dominated episode four at the expense of the Doctor. Further re-writes were requested, one of which was have a lot of the action take place on an asteroid.

At the end of the month, however, it became clear that more money was available for *The Revenge of the Cybermen* than had previously been anticipated. Hinchcliffe and Holmes decided that more material should therefore take place on the asteroid, which could now be filmed on location. Deciding himself to tackle this overhaul of Davis' scripts, Holmes replaced the miners with an alien race. Holmes also made the Cybermen more emotional expressing such sentiments as "excellent" and even gloating at the Doctor. Davis wasn't happy with the extensive rewrites to his scripts, many of which led to a number of continuity errors in the story. In one of Davis' earlier drafts, the Cybermen appear much earlier in the story, which explained the presence of the Cybermats on the beacon; however, in the broadcast version, they don't arrive until the end of Part Two, and it's never explained how the Cybermats got onto the beacon. Sadly, this would be the last time that Gerry Davis would write for the series.

While initial planning got underway for Season Twelve, writer Robert Sloman

One of the most popular eras of the original Doctor Who series was the seven seasons that Tom Baker portrayed the Doctor.

(*The Time Monster, The Green Death*), was pencilled in to write the final story of the season as had happened for the past four years. Sloman's script was to become known as *Avenging Angel* and was under consideration around November 1974, but it would appear that little work was performed on the story, and it would be eventually replaced by *Terror of the Zygons* by Robert Banks Stewart. Years later when asked about the story, Sloman confessed that he couldn't ever remember submitting a story by this title.

Future script editor Douglas Adams submitted an idea about a spaceship called the "B" Ark leaving Earth with the affluent but useless members of society aboard. This idea was quickly rejected but saw Adams adapt elements of the story as part of his *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* series.

Season Thirteen

Around the start of November 1974, Terrance Dicks submitted a script idea called *The Haunting* that involved the Doctor confronting vampires. The outline was commissioned to turn it into a storyline on December 11, however, as Hinchcliffe and Holmes steered *Doctor Who* more in the direction that they wanted to take the series, it was agreed that this was not the type of story they wanted to feature and *The Haunting* was formally on May 13, 1975. In the meantime, Dicks was commissioned to write *The Brain of Morbius* instead. Of interest, some of the elements of *The Haunting* were reused in Dick's abortive script *The Vampire Mutation* which would eventually morph into the Season Eighteen story *State of Decay*.

Barry Letts was commissioned to write a storyline called *The Prisoner of Time* on January 21, 1975, exactly one day before he was contracted to direct *The Android Invasion.* Letts based the storyline on the audition piece he had written for the purpose of casting the role of Sarah Jane Smith in 1973. Full scripts were eventually requested but it eventually turned out that producer Philip Hinchcliffe was unhappy with Letts' original draft of episode one, requesting several alterations. Unfortunately Letts was unable to come up with a revised version that was acceptable to the production team and *The Prisoner of Time* was eventually dropped.

Left to right: Tom Baker, Elisabeth Sladen, Ian Marter

Around the start of November 1974, Terrance Dicks submitted a script idea called The Haunting that involved the Doctor confronting vampires.

Another story for season thirteen was *Nightmare Planet* by Dennis Spooner about a planet where the populace is unknowingly subjugated with drugs in their food and water. Misdeeds are punished with the temporary suppression of the drugs which causes the people to see terrible monsters all around them. Spooner was commissioned to develop a full storyline on January 31, 1975 and later commissioned on February 4 to provide full scripts. When the finished scripts were turned in, script editor Robert Holmes was not happy with the drugs element of the story, and *Nightmare Planet* was dropped.

At some point while Season Thirteen was in production, writer *Chris Boucher* submitted an unsolicited submission titled *The Silent Scream* to the production office in early 1975. While Holmes and Hinchcliffe were impressed by the story, it was deemed unsuitable for *Doctor Who*, but both were encouraged to work with Boucher on further ideas for the series.

After some time away from writing for the series, Terry Nation submitted a Fourth Doctor and Sarah Jane storyline called *Return to Sukannan* on February 13, 1975. The storyline wasn't pursued as Robert Holmes had asked Nation to expand *The Android Invasion* to full script.

New writer Robin Smyth submitted a storyline called *The Beasts of Manzic* for consideration. The storyline was formally rejected on May 13, 1975.

Season Fourteen

Many fans will recall writer Eric Pringle's Fifth Doctor story *The Awakening*, however Pringle first submitted a storyline and was

Tom Baker animately illustrating a point

> ***Chris Boucher worked with Philip Hinchcliffe and Robert Holmes on a storyline featuring the Fourth Doctor and Leela entitled The Mentor Conspiracy that was set on a colony ship...***

commissioned on August 11, 1975 to produce the first two episodes of script called *The Angarath*, about a race of people who offered human sacrifices to a bunch of sentient rocks. The requested episodes were submitted a few weeks later on September 27. A few months had gone by and Pringle had had no response on the scripts' suitability so he decided to complete the serial regardless, eventually submitting the final two episodes on March 10, 1976. Hinchcliffe was not happy with the initial two parts and had decided not to proceed with the story and the story was formally cancelled on June 23, 1976.

After the rejection of *The Silent Scream*, Chris Boucher worked with Philip Hinchcliffe and Robert Holmes on a storyline featuring the Fourth Doctor and Leela entitled *The Mentor Conspiracy* that was set on a colony ship which has been home to a civilization spanning several generations. The story featured future companion Leela and another character Andor, who would both eventually appear in *The Face of Evil*. *The Mentor Conspiracy* underwent a fair amount of development but would eventually be abandoned on October 30, 1975.

Another story that that Boucher was working on at around the same time was *The Dreamers of Phados* which was rejected a few months earlier than *The Mentor Conspiracy*.

It had become a common occurrence for the production office to receive unsolicited scripts from fans of the series and it was in late 1975 when Marc Platt (*Ghost Light*) submitted a storyline called *Fires of the Starmind* featuring the Fourth Doctor, Sarah Jane and Harry. The libraries of Gallifrey apparently stored their information on photons and a sentient star uses this as a means of invading Gallifrey. Overall Robert Holmes liked the script and was quite impressed by the quality of writing, but still felt it lacked action and drama and needed a proper antagonist, however Holmes wrote back and encouraged Platt to continue writing. The script was formally rejected on December 15, 1975.

Around the same time as Platt's script was received by the production office, Holmes received another unsolicited storyline called *The Menday Fault* by David Wiltshire who by day worked as a dentist and magazine editor. The script had the Doctor and Sarah Jane join the crew of the Thor, an experimental nuclear submarine attempting to set a new depth record by entering the Fault of Menday in the Bermuda Triangle. The fault turns out to be a passageway to a subterranean world, and the Thor is captured by a race called the Suranians, led by Zorr. The Suranians' world is lit by a glowing cloud of gas that is beginning to fade and so Zorr wants to use the Polaris missiles aboard the Thor to invade the surface. He threatens Sarah's life to force the Doctor's co-operation, but she is saved by Nephus, a merman-like Trelw. Nephus' people are being mind-controlled by the Suranians, but the Doctor manages to destroy the transmitter, and incites a rebellion. Nephus kills Zorr, and the Thor is able to return to the surface world. The production office chose not to pursue this story any further.

"An isolated North African outpost of the French Foreign Legion becomes the focal point of a confrontation between the Skarkel and the Khoorians, two factions of an alien race," and so went the storyline of *The Lost Legion* by veteran director Douglas Camfield that was commissioned by Philip Hinchcliffe on January 22, 1976. The idea for the story stemmed back to when Camfield had completed work on *The Seeds of Doom* for Season Thirteen and approached both Hinchcliffe and Robert Holmes about the possibility of writing a script for the upcoming season. Hinchcliffe was excited by the idea but Holmes had his doubts even though Camfield had several previous writing credits to his name. Camfield was inspired by *Beau Geste* by P.C. Wren, one of Camfield's favourite books, and it was agreed that this would be the story that would dramatically write Sarah Jane Smith out of the series by killing her off, as Elisabeth Sladen had indicated that she wanted to leave. Camfield had also hoped that he would be allowed to direct his own story.

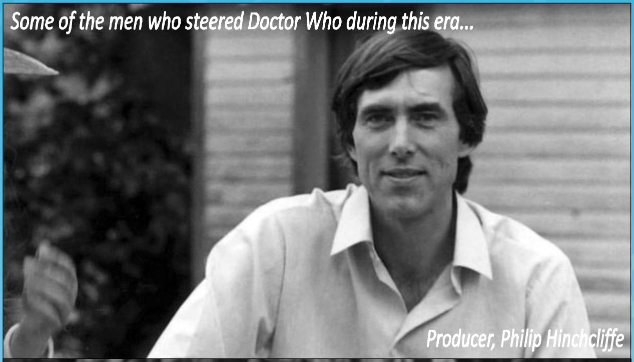
When Camfield submitted the script for the first episode on February 9, it didn't meet Holmes' approval, and he began work on the possible replacement that would eventually become *The Hand of Fear*. Camfield continued to work on the other three episodes but he became increasingly late in delivering each episode. *The Lost Legion* was eventually taken off the schedule at the end of March 1976. Camfield continued to work on the story, finally submitting the completed part four on September 24, 1976 by which time the production team was no longer interested in the story.

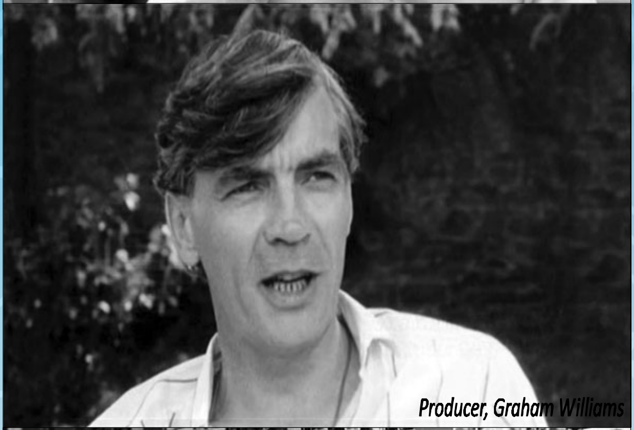
Veteran screenwriter Basil Dawson was approached by Robert Holmes to develop a story which would introduce a new companion to replace Sarah Jane Smith. Dawson came up with *The Gaslight Murders* that involved a series of murders in Victorian London and introduced a young Cockney girl whom the Doctor would take under his wing and educate, much in the manner of Eliza Doolittle in the play *Pygmalion*. Intended as the fourth story of Season Fourteen, for some reason the story was quickly abandoned and replaced by *The Face of Evil* in the schedule. While the story was not used, Robert Holmes later used the basis of the story as the framework in *The Talons of Weng-Chiang*.

Season Fifteen

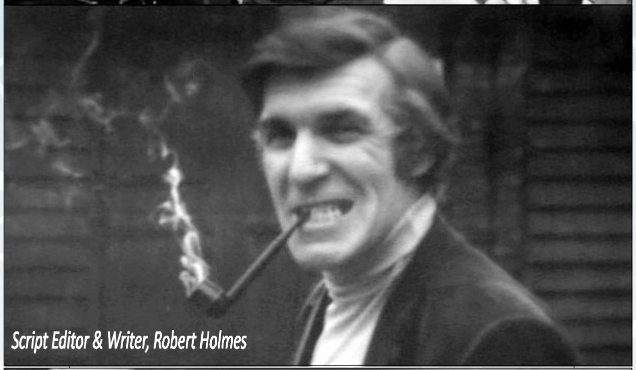
In the fall of 1976, it appeared that the team of producer Philip Hinchcliffe and script editor Robert Holmes would continue to oversee *Doctor Who* during season fifteen. One of the stories they considered at this time was a Robert Holmes penned serial based on Joseph Conrad's 1899 novel *Heart of Darkness.* Unfortunately these plans were prevented when the BBC decided to replace Hinchcliffe with Graham Williams.

Some of the men who steered Doctor Who during this era...


Producer, Philip Hinchcliffe


Producer, Graham Williams

Producer, John-Nathan Turner


Script Editor & Writer, Robert Holmes

Script Editor & Writer, Douglas Adams

> *Two million years ago, the inhabitants of the planet Krikkit built a race of androids called the Krikkitmen to wipe out all life in the universe. They were stopped by the Time Lords, who trapped Krikkit within a temporal prison. Now, however, a group of Krikkitmen which escaped the Time Lords' sentence are trying to reassemble the components of a key which can free Krikkit -- components of which happen to resemble elements of the Earth game of cricket, itself actually a reflection of the ancient war. The Doctor and Sarah stumble upon this plot when they see the Krikkitmen steal the Ashes during a test match at Lords. They then travel to the planet Bethselamin to foil the next step in the Krikkitmen's quest.*

The Krikkitmen was one several ideas that writer Douglas Adams proposed to the production office in 1976. The story was rejected by Robert Holmes, who did however encourage Adams to keep submitting material for his consideration. This ultimately led to Adams' commission for *The Pirate Planet.*

In 1980, Adams revised *The Krikkitmen* as a potential *Doctor Who* feature film, although nothing ever became of this project. And, not one to waste an idea, Adams eventually adapted many of the ideas from this story in his novel *Life, The Universe and Everything*.

Producer Graham Williams had become quite enamoured by the Time Lords and wanted to feature a Gallifrey-based story to close out the season. As a result, new script editor Anthony Read approached David Weir with whom he had worked with on the series *The Troubleshooters*. The resultant script was titled *The Killer Cats of Geng-Singh* and concerned a race of cat people native to Gallifrey which was commissioned on July 18, 1977. As the month progressed, and Weir turned in further episodes of the story, both Anthony Read and story director Gerald Blake realized that Weir's scripts would be impossible to achieve on *Doctor Who's* limited budget – Weir's scripts featured things as a stadium full of cat people. The story was formally abandoned in mid-August 1977, leaving Read and Williams to hurriedly write *The Invasion of Time* in its place.

Season Sixteen

One of the founding fathers of British television drama, *Dixon of Dock Green* creator Ted Willis, had worked with Anthony Read during the 1960s. As a result, Read approached Willis about writing for *Doctor Who* and developed a storyline called *The Lords of Misrule* that was commissioned in late-1977/early-1978.

> *The people of the planet Tetran are enslaved by the cruel Shadowlords, who rule from an orbiting castle. The Shadowlords hunt their subjects using wolf-life Prowlers, and force them to duel one another. The Doctor discovers that the Tetrans are actually descended from the survivors of a crashed mining ship, while the Shadowlords are security robots, disguised and maddened due to their connection with the pilot, who is held on the brink of death by the vessel's computer. K-9 severs the pilot's link with the ship, deactivating the Shadowlords. The Doctor and Romana recover the fifth segment of the Key To Time, concealed as a massive crystal powering the Shadowlords' castle.*

At one point this story was intended as the fifth story of the season, but it appears that it never progressed beyond the storyline stage and its spot was eventually filled by *The Power of Kroll*.

Another story idea that Lewis submitted around the same time was *The Shield of Zarak* that featured the Fourth Doctor, the first Romana and K9. The story had begun life as *The Doppelgangers* when it was commissioned in January 7 1978 as a storyline by producer Graham Williams and then developed further when it was commissioned as a four-episode script a few weeks later in February 1978. The basis of the story was that legendary heroes were actually the complete opposite of how they have been portrayed throughout history. The Doctor and Romana would encounter Robin Hood when they were searching for the fourth segment to the Key To Time and discover that the alleged hero was actually a black-hearted villain.

Lewis wasn't that well acquainted with *Doctor Who* and when the scripts began to arrive in late April, it was apparent that they would need a lot of work. Sadly during this time Lewis began to experience numerous personal problems and had started to descend into alcoholism. When he eventually met with Williams and Read to discuss the scripts, Lewis showed up drunk. The story didn't progress further after this point and it was abandoned by mid-May 1978 and eventually replaced by the *Androids of Tara*. The story was formally rejected on January 11, 1979.

Shortly after completing *Image of The Fendahl,* Chris Boucher submitted a story idea about a remote Earth outpost being attacked. Sadly, the idea never developed further as soon after Boucher was script editing *Blake's 7* and then BBC Head of Drama, Ronnie Marsh, did not want writers contributing to both shows.

Season Seventeen

One of the first stories proposed for the upcoming season was Andrew Smith's *The Secret of Cassius*. Not much is known about this story other than it appears that it never developed beyond the initial storyline that was rejected by Anthony Read in August 1978. Read encouraged Smith to continue writing even though he was totally unaware that Smith was a *Doctor Who* fan in his mid-teens. Smith would eventually be commissioned to pen *Full Circle* some eighteen months later.

Director Pennant Roberts began work on a

storyline for a potential story called *Dragons of Fear* in the Fall of 1978. The story drew on elements of both Celtic folklore and the Welsh language. The storyline was accepted and Roberts received a full script commission on January 10, 1979 with a view to making *Dragons* the fifth serial of season seventeen.

> *The Doctor, Romana and K-9 arrive on the planet Erinella. There, the Doctor is immediately arrested and accused of poisoning a local noble. Indeed, everyone seems to recognise him, despite the fact that he's never been to Erinella before. Romana and K-9 retreat to the woods where they meet Og, the keeper of Erinella's dragons. Meanwhile, the Doctor discovers that the true murderer is a Queen who is scheming to control all of Erinella. Moreover, he has accidentally arrived on the planet later than he was meant to. He escapes and travels back in time to set in motion the events that he has already witnessed. Romana convinces Og to send the dragons against the Queen, while the Doctor tricks her into confessing her crimes.*

When Roberts submitted the completed four part story, script editor Anthony Read realized that it would be an expensive production to mount on the *Doctor Who* budget. As a result the story was dropped around February 1979.

Dragons of Fear eventually changed its title to *Erinella* – which roughly translates as “another Ireland” in Gaelic – was re-commissioned in January 1980 when it was felt that it could perhaps become the penultimate serial of Season Eighteen. By this time Romana had been replaced with Adric and Roberts was asked modify the story to include this change. Incoming script editor Christopher H Bidmead wanted to ground the series in more realistic science, and after reading over the scripts to *Erinella* he suggested several additional changes to the story. However, by this time Roberts had become fed up with the process and grew disinterested in pursuing the project further. Yet the story didn’t end there, as Roberts chose to resubmit it in the mid-1980s when Eric Saward was script editor, but nothing came of it.

Around the start of 1979 Comic book writers Pat Mills and John Wagner submitted a storyline set in a parallel universe where the Roman Empire still existed in present day. The storyline was never taken up and Mills and Wagner eventually adapted the story as their first comic strip for *Doctor Who*

Around the start of 1979 Comic book writers Pat Mills and John Wagner submitted a storyline set in a parallel universe where the Roman Empire still existed in present day. The storyline was never taken up and Mills and Wagner eventually adapted the story as their first comic strip for *Doctor Who Weekly*.

A story that bounced around throughout Season Seventeen and Season Eighteen was the John Lloyd penned *The Doomsday Contract*.

> *While vacationing on Cimmerian II, the Doctor is summoned before the Altribunal of Coelare Coelum, an intergalactic court. He has been called as a witness in a millennia-old case in which the Plenum Trust Corporation (whose Executive Vice President, Smilax, is an old friend) is opposing the purchase of the Earth by Cosmegalon and its unscrupulous owner, Jugend Bruisa. Plenum had been testing the Spondilas Chamber -- an incredibly powerful device capable of polymorphing matter -- when Cosmegalon bought the Earth via dubious means. Now Smilax fears that Chamber falling into Bruisa's hands. In court, the Doctor gives evidence that the Earth is home to intelligent life, which by law would nullify Cosmegalon's ownership. He is sent to Earth to retrieve a human as proof. Arriving in mediaeval Yorkshire, the Doctor is prevented from completing his task by the monstrous Children of Pyxis, who have been despatched by Cosmegalon. Fortunately, he is saved from death by the timely intervention of Smilax, and does manage to spirit away the Spondilas Chamber. Nonetheless, with the Doctor having seemingly failed, the court rules in Cosmegalon's favour. However, the Doctor tricks Bruisa and the Children of Pyxis into travelling to modern-day Earth near a missile base, where their ship is annihilated.*

John Lloyd was a frequent collaborator with script editor Douglas Adams who had commissioned Lloyd to pen *The Doomsday Contract* for Season Seventeen around late October 1978. Lloyd used ideas from an unfinished science fiction novel *GiGax* he was writing. The original storyline was very much in the comedic style of Adams. Lloyd was asked to rein in many of the complex effects sequences and to delete the Spondilas Chamber as it was felt it was irrelevant to the plot. Lloyd was also requested to replace the Children of Pyxis due to fears that then child labour laws would make production difficult. Lloyd made the requested changes in addition to adding a new race of desert nomads-cum-mercenaries called the Wadifalayee, although producer Graham Williams was worried these aliens would offend Muslims and changing the Plenum Trust to an altruistic conservation organization, while the chairman of Cosmegalon was renamed Skorpius.

While vacationing on Cimmerian II, the Doctor is summoned before the Altribunal of Coelare Coelum, an intergalactic court.

On January 16, 1979, Lloyd had to abandon further rewrites to the story due to his commitments as producer of *Not The Nine O'clock News*, after which the story sat in limbo until Adams contacted the writer to get his permission to allow another writer to develop the storyline into full scripts. On February 7, former *Blake's 7* writer Allan Prior was secured to take over. Prior submitted his finished scripts on March 2, but these were rejected.

By August 15 Adams attention was turning towards production of Season Eighteen. Once again Adams tried to resurrect the story which was now referred to as *Shylock* and sought permission from Lloyd to allow another writer to complete the scripts.

With plans progressing on the upcoming season, sometime around September 26, the story had reverted back to *The Doomsday Contract* but Adams had yet to secure another writer to complete the story. A further two months passed and with Adams' departure in November, it appears the story was dropped altogether.

Former producer Philip Hinchcliffe submitted the storyline for *Valley of the Lost* around November 1978. The story featured the Fourth Doctor and Romana who:

> *…travel to the jungles of Brazil, where they come upon a Luron scout ship which crash-landed in 1870. The vessel emits a bubble of time which has kept the surroundings preserved as they were then -- including a lost city of gold, inhabited by Maygor savages who worship the only Luron survivor, Godrin, as their deity. Godrin convinces the Doctor to bring him to London, but once there uses modern technology to send a signal to the Luron fleet to commence an invasion of Earth. The Doctor and Romana manage to infiltrate the Luron mothership and take control of its power source. Faced with destruction, the Lurons agree to abandon their invasion.*

Valley of The Lost was eventually rejected on January 3, 1979 on the grounds of cost and because other stories under consideration around the same time – including *The Armageddon Factor* and *Child Prodigy* – also dealt with frozen-time concepts.

Alistair Beaton – a colleague of script editor Douglas Adams from his days as a comedy writer –and Sarah Dunant were commissioned on December 12, 1978 to develop scripts based on their *Child Prodigy* storyline. However, when the writers submitted their scripts on January 9, 1979 they were immediately rejected as being unacceptable.

Another story that was considered for Season Seventeen and Season Eighteen was Alan Drury's *The Tearing of The Veil*. This four-part story featured the fourth Doctor, Romana and K9.

> *An evil force pursues the TARDIS to a Victorian vicarage, where the vicar's widow is being defrauded by phoney spiritualists. As supernatural phenomena grip the vicarage, the con artists are killed off one by one. Even K9 is apparently torn apart by a poltergeist, while much of the Doctor's life force is drained from him, turning him into a disinterested crank wandering about in his nightgown.*

Drury was formally commissioned by Douglas Adams on April 2, 1979. The writer submitted the scripts for the first two episodes in early May, at which point it was decided that the scripts were not working out. Regardless, Adams continued to discuss the story with Drury over the summer and by September 19 an acceptable draft had been completed.

As a parting gesture, Douglas Adams submitted a story idea called Retirement intended as a two-part story. The Doctor's mood swings finally get the better of him and he goes into self-imposed retirement…

As Adams was leaving the script editor's post in November 1979, he passed the completed scripts on to his successor Christopher H. Bidmead for consideration in Season Eighteen. However, Bidmead disliked the fanciful science-fiction favoured by Adams, and since Drury's story was in this style, Bidmead chose to discard the story altogether.

As a parting gesture, Douglas Adams submitted a story idea called *Retirement* intended as a two-part story. The Doctor's mood swings finally get the better of him and he goes into self-imposed retirement, having grown sick and tired of having to save the universe every day of his life.

Graham Williams dismissed the idea, feeling that it went against everything the show stood for and made the Doctor an anti-hero. Adams persisted with the notion until very late in the day when he was forced to come up with an alternative in *Shada*.

Season Eighteen

Shortly after becoming *Doctor Who* script editor in January 1980, Christopher H Bidmead appealed to serious science fiction authors to submit ideas to the show. One of the first scripts Bidmead received was from John Brosnan, who at the time was writing for *Starburst* magazine. Brosnan's storyline had the Doctor landing at BBC Television Center where he meets Tom Baker – the actor who plays him on television – and the pair works together to combat a threat against the Earth. Brosnan's idea was not pursued but he did go on to write more than a dozen novels such as *Skyship* and *Carnosaur*.

Christopher Priest was a well-known science-fiction writer who was approached by Douglas Adams to pen a story for *Doctor Who*. However, with Adams' departure in November 1979, and with no concrete ideas forthcoming, incoming script editor Christopher H. Bidmead commissioned Priest to develop a storyline for submission on February 27, 1980. Priest came up with a political thriller titled *Sealed Orders* that was set on Gallifrey in which the Doctor is seemingly ordered by the Time Lords to kill Romana.

Priest delivered full scripts on March 24 by which time it was planned that this story would conclude a trilogy of stories set in the pocket universe of E-Space and would see the departure of both Romana and K9. However, with Priest not accustomed to writing for television, it quickly became clear that his scripts were not suitable for production especially when the story consisted of a complex plot involving numerous time paradoxes including one that would see the appearance of a second Doctor, and also included the idea of time running into itself resulting in one TARDIS existing inside of another TARDIS.

Bidmead provided the Priest with heavily-edited samples as guidance for what he wanted, but the author objected to these, and the relationship between the two quickly deteriorated. Priest stopped working on *Sealed Orders* in April 1980 (*Warrior's Gate* eventually took its place). *Sealed Orders* was formally abandoned in June, although Bidmead and producer John Nathan-Turner still hoped that it could be revisited in the future.

James Follett was another well-known science fiction writer who had originally submitted his idea for *Into the Comet* in September 1979 when Douglas Adams was still script editor. With Bidmead now having replaced Adams, Follett submitted the storyline around May 1980 which involved monsters attacking a race of beings that live inside Halley's Comet. From all accounts it appears that the storyline was never pursued.

Having previously written *The Creature from the Pit, The Androids of Tara* and *The Stones of Blood* for the series, David Fisher submitted a storyline called *The Castle of Doom* for consideration as part of Season Eighteen. New producer John Nathan-Turner rejected the storyline on November 7, 1979 in favour of Fisher developing *The Leisure Hive*.

The Doctor takes a break from his adventures

Another storyline that Fisher had discussed with Douglas Adams before his departure was *The Psychonauts* which saw the Doctor battling the Nephilim, creatures that travel through time in sleeping units that resemble sarcophagi. Fisher had taken the name Nephilim from the Old Testament, and from various Jewish writings, where it is referred to as a form of demon. Fisher submitted *The Psychonauts* for Season Eighteen but once again this storyline was rejected by Nathan-Turner in favour of Fisher developing *The Leisure Hive*.

Three storylines were commissioned throughout the month of March 1980. The first was *The Mark of Lumos* by Keith Miles on March 14; while two other stories *Farer Nohan* by Andrew Stephenson and *Mouth of Grath* by Malcolm Edwards and Leroy Kettle on March 18. Virtually nothing is known about these stories and it is presumed that they were never developed beyond their initial storylines.

Jack Gardner was commissioned by Bidmead on March 29, 1980 to develop the storyline for *The Dogs of Darkness* into full scripts. Several weeks later Bidmead instructed Gardner to replace the Fourth Doctor with the Fifth Doctor as the story was now being considered as part Season Nineteen. By April 1981 the story was still under consideration but it appears it was abandoned a few weeks after.

A story that would be developed across the tenures of three separate Doctor's was Pat Mills' and John Wagner's *The Song of the Space Whale* which was originally submitted in late 1980. Mills and Wagner were writing comics for *Doctor Who Weekly* when they devised the original concept for this story featuring the Fourth Doctor. Full scripts of this story would eventually be commissioned on September 9, 1981 sometime after it was known that Tom Baker would be leaving at the end of Season Eighteen.

Writer Geoff Lowe submitted a storyline titled *The Romanoids* to script editor Bidmead during the summer of 1980. Bidmead submitted the outline to producer John Nathan-Turner on December 9, 1980 for his consideration and it appears that the story was rejected outright.

Actor Nabil Shaban, who would eventually go on to play Sil in *Vengeance on Varos* and

The Trial of a Time Lord Parts Five to Eight, submitted a storyline for Season Eighteen titled *Invasion of the Veridians*. It isn't known what the script was about but it appears that the story was never pursued by the production office.

Season Nineteen with Tom Baker

In early 1980, it was unknown if Tom Baker would continue in *Doctor Who*. All signs at the time seemed to indicate that he would return for his eighth season. With this in mind, Christopher Bidmead and John Nathan-Turner were starting to feel out ideas for scripts for the forthcoming season.

Two storylines were commissioned around this time with a view to developing them into full scripts. The first, *Soldar and The Plastoids* was a storyline by John Bennett that was commissioned on April 10, 1980; while the second storyline, *The Psychrons*, by Terence Greer, was commissioned on June 13. Both storylines were eventually dropped when Tom Baker made it known that he would not be carrying on as the Doctor beyond Season Eighteen.

| Bob Furnell

Quotes taken from "Doctor Who: A Brief History of Time Travel" (www.shannonsullivan.com/drwho)

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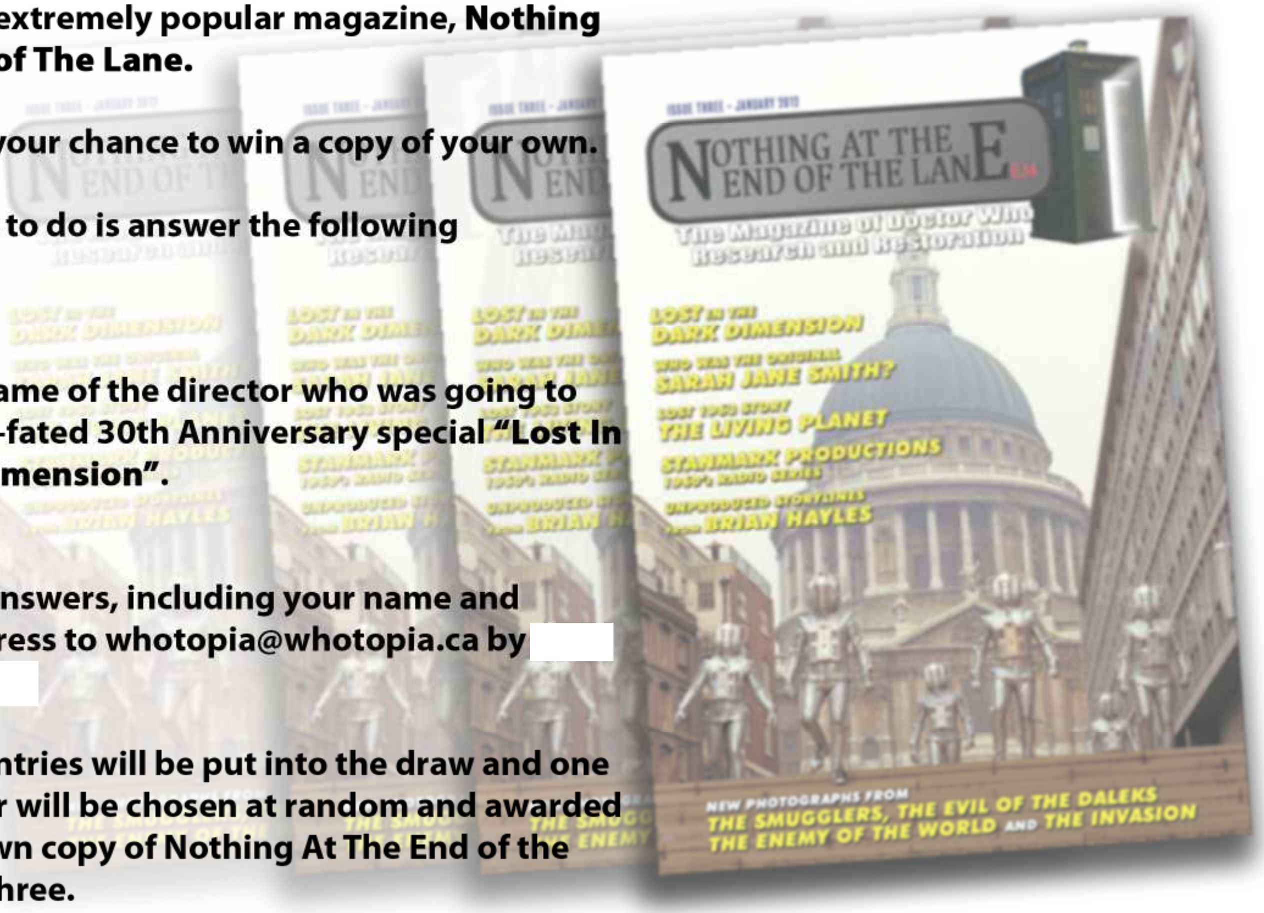
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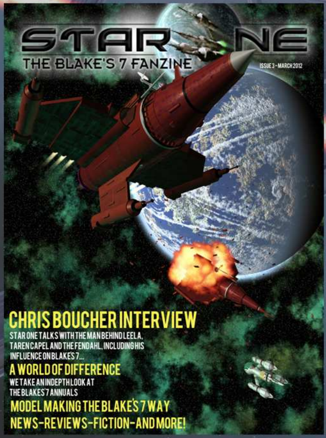
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SERIES 6 REVIEWED

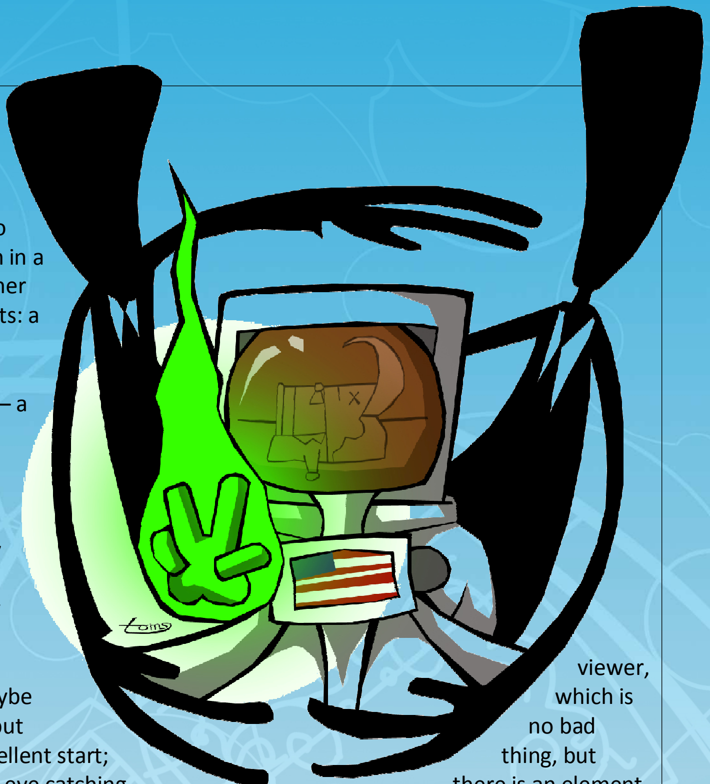
THE IMPOSSIBLE ASTRONAUT

EPISODE ONE
Written: Steven Moffat
Directed: Toby Haynes

Doctor Who has featured over-arching threads to entire series before, *The Trial of a Time Lord* and *The Key to Time* seasons being the most obvious, but this year, The Moff is trying a new approach. This opening episode acts as a prelude to the new series, setting up numerous plot strands to be explored over the next twelve episodes; it poses all kinds of questions, but if it's answers you want, you'll have to make sure you see the rest of the series to find out.

Both the pace and tone of what is to come are signposted right at the outset: a rapid stream of gags showing an irreverent approach to history and time travel, the Doctor dancing with Stan and Ollie, getting his newly-acquired Stetson shot off his head and so on. Once this teaser has put us at our ease, Moffat grabs our attention by turning the episode on its head equally rapidly with the appearance of a mysterious astronaut and the apparent death of the Doctor. We're drip fed further as-yet unexplained plot strands: President Nixon, the phone calls from a child, the reappearance of the astronaut in 1969, Amy's pregnancy – all one on top of the other and none of which as yet appears to relate to each other. Or make any sense.

Having set up so many plot strands, the story see-saws from playful mode (the quips start flying again, aimed at anyone and everyone: *Mrs Robinson*, the Doctor's resemblance to the Easter Island statues, and so on) and back into chilling mode with the introduction of the Silence in the White House toilets. This is an impressive sequence, one of several truly scary moments in the episode although it's not clear why the alien felt the need to destroy the woman; he certainly didn't need to as she'd have forgotten seeing him in a few seconds. The Silence are another of Moffat's ingenious alien concepts: a race intervening and controlling mankind which are forgotten by anyone as soon as they turn away – a comment on our inability to see beyond the status quo, perhaps.



But is the episode any good? It's not an easy episode to review, any more than a book could be accurately reviewed based on only the first chapter. I would have preferred fewer open-ended plot strands in an opening episode, maybe delaying some until episode two, but despite that little niggle it's an excellent start; the direction and photography are eye catching without appearing gimmicky, fully exploiting the Stateside location work and draining every last drop of tension out of River and Rory exploring the basement. The dialogue is sharp and witty and, for once, the music (owing a little to Ennio Morricone in places) doesn't swamp the drama. Matt Smith is by now bedded in as the Doctor and I can't help thinking that at times he's channelling George McFly.

Yet as far as this very different series is concerned, the jury is still out because, as yet, it could go anywhere. Russell T Davies' tenure on *Who* proved that setting up a big plot is one thing but resolving it satisfactorily is another thing entirely. The episode makes demands of the viewer, which is no bad thing, but there is an element of risk; yes, in the long run it will be more rewarding to a viewer who has seen *The Lodger* and all the previous River Song episodes – yet a casual viewer may miss some of the references or, having missed an episode, may fall behind and wander off to do something else with his/her Saturday evenings. These are the casual viewers which previous series have gone to great lengths to get on board and, like it or not, Moffat has to retain their loyalty. *The X-Files* is a stark warning against this sort of drawn-out story arc – it was a series that featured several open-ended storylines and posed many questions while it rode a wave of popularity, yet it took so long in resolving such plot strands that not everyone stuck around to find out. **8/10 [RF]**

DAY OF THE MOON

EPISODE TWO
Written: Steven Moffat
Directed: Toby Haynes

After a cracking start to Series Six with *The Impossible Astronaut* the two-part season opener concluded with *Day of the Moon*. The question is did it live up to expectations?

Despite the fact that *The Impossible Astronaut/Day of the Moon* was a great season opener (indeed, the best and most intriguing opener we have had for many years), the story is an odd one as, by its conclusion, it left rather more questions than answers, all of which we hope will be tied up by the end of the series. Firstly, we have the mysterious Silence, whom we are told have been controlling mankind's destiny for thousands of years. Precisely why they have been has yet to be answered, which hopefully means that we will see more of them by the time the series finishes; and this is no bad thing as they are wonderfully enigmatic aliens, who deserve to be seen again but hopefully not with the frequency of the Daleks and Cybermen, whose frequent reappearances are becoming tedious and running out of originality. More, one wonders why the Silence are so eager for mankind to make its first venture into space exploration with the Apollo mission in July 1969.

Steven Moffat and director Toby Haynes succeed where JN-T so often failed. The stunning Utah locations are used to enhance the narrative and not merely as a scenic backdrop as in the past Steven Moffat and director Toby Haynes succeed where JN-T so often failed. The stunning Utah locations are used to enhance the narrative and not merely as a scenic backdrop as in the past One of the nice things about this story as a whole is its use of a good expansive time period, stretching from approximately April 1969 to January 1970. *Day of the Moon* begins with Canton Delaware III, superbly played by Mark Frost, apparently capturing Amy and then Rory in the Utah desert, but this seems to be part of his plan, or at least the Doctor's. The Doctor himself has been kept padlocked in a straightjacket in Area 51 for the past three months. His hair has grown and he has a bushy bearded, putting one rather in mind of Tsar Nicholas II.

The most intriguing thing about the Silence is the way that they edit themselves out of the memory of whoever has seen them? Again why? One must wonder if they are of malevolent purpose and let's not forget that the Rills were themselves a gentle race despite their ugliness in *Galaxy Four* (1965), or do the Silence, who it seems have been on Earth for thousands of years, have their own agenda? For what purpose have they allowed mankind to set foot on the moon at this stage of Earth's history? The Doctor places a small nano-recorder into the palm of the hands of Clanton, River, Amy and Rory so that they can remember the Silence. Whilst this is okay, it does seem a little clichéd.

However, the fact that the Silence are of malevolent intent would appear to be compounded when we learn that they built the device which was situated on the first floor of Craig Owen's house in *The Lodger* (2010) and were – or should that be are – responsible for the destruction of the TARDIS hinted at at the climax of *Cold Blood* (2010) and witnessed in the Van Gogh painting we see in *The Pandorica Opens* (2010). Indeed, it is they who built yet another 'perfect prison' for the Doctor in this episode. The fact that it is made of Dwarf Star Alloy, last heard of in *Warriors' Gate*, makes one wonder if they have a connection with E-Space and the doomed crew of the Privateer. There again, if so, for what reason? Indeed, did they build the Pandorica? The Silence are certainly intriguing creatures, and whilst not, in the opinion of this reviewer, quite as good as the Weeping Angels, the rest of the series in both parts will be worth watching just to see what exactly the Silence are up to.

Meanwhile, in search of the child in the astronaut suit, Amy and Clanton visit a seemingly derelict and superbly gothic orphanage run by a Dr Renfrew (Kerry Shale). It is in these scenes that director Toby Haynes really comes into his own, creating suspenseful images which are worthy of Alfred Hitchcock himself. Renfrew is decrepit and insists in the fact that it is 1965 when it is actually 1969, the orphanage having closed in 1967. The walls are strewn with graffiti such as 'Leave', 'Leave now' and 'Get Out'. Again, the Silence are present at the orphanage in force, but does the fact that they can edit themselves out of a person's memory offer a reason why Dr Renfrew thinks that he is still in pre-1965 rather than 1969? This is the problem with both *The Impossible Astronaut* and *Day of the Moon*. It is a superbly written story, as are all Steven Moffatt's stories, but it leaves more questions than answers. Crucially, it may be fine for us fans who will stick with it to the bitter end, but one must ask how much patience does the average general viewer have to sit through a split season of what has proven to be so far a very mixed bag, to wait for the answers?

> *"The most intriguing thing about the Silence is the way that they edit themselves out of the memory of whoever has seen them?"*

Renfrew is adamant that the child must be cared for. A short time later Amy has her first encounter with the woman we would later come to know as Madame Kovarian, but for her enigmatic cameos in this early part of the season she is just referred to as 'The eye patch woman'. Could it be that the child is the soon-to-be born Melody Pond, as we now know this isn't the real Amy and is possibly a 'ganger'? I say this as we don't really know as yet when Amy was kidnapped.

So far *Day of the Moon* has been intriguing and intense, but some light relief is provided by the Doctor tinkering with the Apollo rocket and insisting to the mission's Head of Security that he is on a top secret mission for the President, which is proven when the President, an amazingly affable Richard M Nixon and superbly portrayed by Stuart Milligan, shows up. Rory is also snooping, dressed as an academic in an almost Tenth Doctor suit and a pair of spectacles.

To the mind of this author, Stuart Milligan and Mark Shepherd take all the acting plaudits in this story. Milligan, even under heavy make up doesn't really resemble Nixon and his voice is much mellower than Nixon's was, but it is hard to think of any actor who does resemble Nixon, indeed at the time in which *Day of the Moon* is set Nixon was 53, Stuart Milliagn is 58 but still manages to look years younger than the grizzled President. Milligan's superb blend of bemusement and charm shows the human side to 'Tricky Dicky' and makes him extremely likeable. Indeed, it is a pity that we don't see more of him within the story as a whole. It is to be hoped that the FBI or the CIA find another reason for bringing the Doctor back to the Oval Office at some point during the remaining five years of Nixon's curtailed Presidency.

The acting and direction is the strongest point of *Day of the Moon*. Alex Kingston is on fine form throughout. Far less flirty than in *The Time of Angles* and *The Pandorica Opens/The Big Bang* and much more the archeologist/investigator, escaping Clanton by jumping out of a window and into the TARDIS swimming pool. Mark Shepherd as CIA agent Clinton Delaware III is absolutely superb, and what a companion he would make, so much better than Rory, who after a great start in Series Five has suddenly become quite amazingly bland, almost as though Moffat doesn't know what to do with him apart from to try and kill him off. Indeed, River and Clanton would make far better companions than both Rory and Amy. After all, in the Big Finish audio releases Maggie Stables has proven with aplomb that an older companion can and most certainly does work.

Matt Smith, here beginning his second season as the Doctor, is on superb form. David Tennant is now nothing but a memory. Smith brings a naturalness to the role and it is only when watching him that one realizes just how much David Tennant was acting the role whereas Smith plays the Doctor from the heart and absolutely brilliantly. It is to be hoped that Moffat's negligence of the franchise and the ineptitude of current BBC1 controller Danny Cohen (surely the worst and least competent holder of that post since Jonathan Powell) won't mean that should the series survive beyond the fiftieth anniversary Matt Smith won't be vacating the TARDIS too soon, despite a report in *The Daily Star* newspaper that he wanted a Hollywood career and was looking at Hollywood roles this summer. Hopefully he won't be the first Doctor to vacate the TARDIS without a proper regeneration since Colin Baker.

Despite his playful Troughtonesque portrayal, the Eleventh Doctor can be ruthless when the mood calls for it, telling the human race to destroy the Silence before we know what their intention is – or maybe the Doctor knows something we don't!!

Amy, however, is odd here as indeed she has been throughout the first part of this split season. Again, last season she showed so much promise but after the feistiness of recent female companions such as Rose, Martha and especially Donna, at times now Amy almost seems like the archetypal companion; there to ask questions and get captured, but the climax of *The Impossible Astronaut* added another layer to her character with the announcement that she is pregnant.

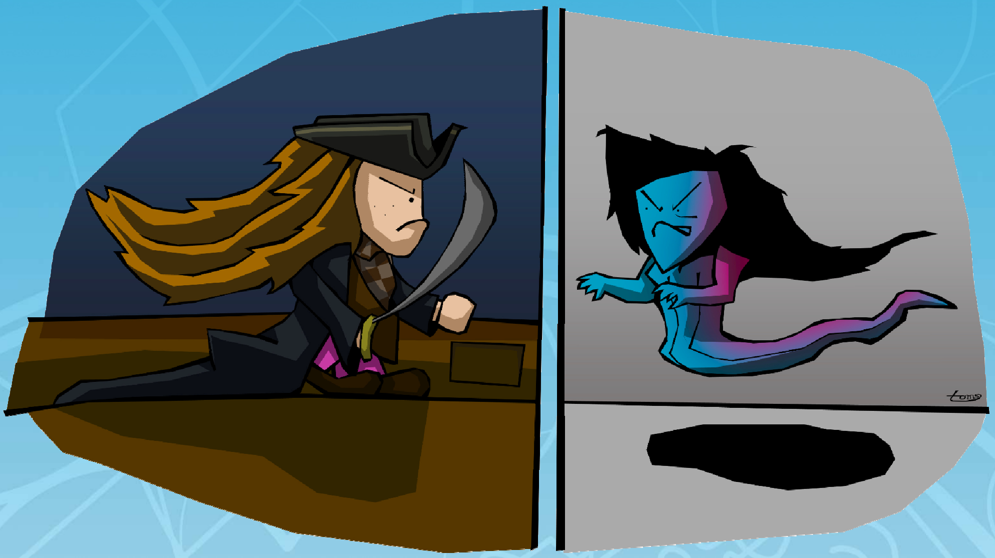
However, the most intriguing scene of the story comes right at it's very conclusion: six months after the TARDIS has left Washington DC in January 1970, in a grimy back alley in downtown New York, a shambling down-and-out encounters a seemingly dying young girl and runs away in shock as the child outstretches her arms, throws back her head and starts to regenerate.

The question is: who is this child? Is she the child we later know as Melody Williams? Is she the child in the astronaut suit? And if she isn't Melody, then who is she? It would be hard to hazard a guess at this stage as Moffat has thrown up red herrings worthy of Agatha Christie throughout the first half of the series, and one can only wonder how long River has been incarcerated at Stormcage. We do know that she is in prison for killing the best man she ever knew, so was she the child in the astronaut suit in the pre-credit sequence of *The Impossible Astronaut*? Indeed, was it the Doctor who died or a ganger?

As I said earlier in this review, this series has so far thrown up far too many questions. Although intriguing, such strung-out anomalies can do nothing but alienate casual viewers, who are vital to the series' long-term survival, which, at the time of writing, in the UK is looking incredibly shaky.

Rumour has it that Moffat wanted the series opener to feel like a season climax and it certainly does!!! This opening two-parter makes *The Pandorica Opens/The Big Bang* look like a mere dress rehearsal, and unfortunately the rest of the first half of Series Six look like something of an anticlimax.

Despite its complexity, *Day of the Moon* provides a fine, intriguing if sometimes downright baffling conclusion to the series' opening story, wonderfully acted by all concerned and brilliantly directed by Toby Haynes, the nearest director we have today who is up to the standard of such recent greats as Graeme Harper, Charles Palmer and Hettie MacDonald. It provides an intriguing set of clues and questions which will doubtless keep us intrigued for the rest of the series. **9/10**
[GP]



THE CURSE OF THE BLACK SPOT
EPISODE THREE
Written: Stephen Thompson
Directed: Jeremy Webb

The Curse of the Black Spot is a swashbuckling, piratical adventure, set in the seventeenth century – writer Steve Thompson's first foray into the world of *Doctor Who*. Featuring the Eleventh Doctor alongside companions Amy and Rory, the episode tells the tale of a beautiful and mysterious woman, who seems to be luring the men aboard Captain Avery's ship to their apparent deaths. However, all is not as it seems, and the Doctor and his friends soon realize that this will be one of the most exhilarating, clichéd and (nearly) heart-breaking trips of their lives. And it all started with an awkward 'Yo ho ho'…

The first shots set the scene for what is to be an incredibly atmospheric and indulgent story. Dark, brooding mist surrounds an impressive CGI ship, and Captain Avery's crew are kitted out in the believably dirty clothing of stowaway pirates. The Doctor's arrival comes at a time when it is, of course, most needed, and it is not long before he is being forced to walk the plank – much to our enjoyment. Naturally, it is Amy's chance to shine, which she fully embraces by coming across a cutlass and a suitably nautical piece of headgear. Swinging to the rescue on some nearby ropes, Amy saves the day by fighting the angered crew with some nicely choreographed swordplay. Unfortunately, she injures one of the crewmembers with her sword; only a small cut, as Amy observes. However, this is all it takes, and the titular black spot appears on the man's outstretched hand. A brilliant sense of madness ensues, and it isn't long until a fantastical green siren appears (played by Lily Cole) – you can't have a pirate story without one, right?

Instantly, all of the injured men fall under the 'spell' of this magical lady, including Rory, Amy's long-suffering husband, who even declares that the siren is the most "beautiful thing he has ever seen." The siren floats impressively through the air, before appearing to disintegrate the injured man in a cloud of ash black smoke. But is this man really dead, or is there something even more sinister to come?

The story continues at a lightning speed, and the audience are treated to a tender moment as Captain Avery comes across his young son, Toby, who has been hidden in the bowels of the ship because of his mother's death. Unaware of his father's intentions, this scene leads to Toby's angry rebellion and a very good performance. The Doctor is on fine form as always, even finding time to crack a joke about Freud ("You're big on the gun thing, aren't you? Freud would say you're compensating"). The episode even sees the Doctor use the word 'groovy', something he has probably regretted ever since.

We soon discover that Toby has a fever, and there are numerous attempts on the crew's lives. The Doctor and his friends have intelligently noticed that the siren seems to be attacking through water, as if it is a porthole into the ship and their world. The Doctor treats the Captain to a quick trip into the TARDIS, something Avery unsurprisingly marvels at. However, the Doctor is brought marvelously down a peg or two when Avery declares that it is just another ship, as it, too, has a steering wheel.

Eventually, after many more near misses and a whole load of running, the Doctor realizes that is isn't just water that the siren can emerge from – it is anything that has a reflection, and especially polished metal. Dashing to save the day, a

Eventually, after many more near misses and a whole load of running, the Doctor realizes that is isn't just water that the siren can emerge from – it is anything that has a reflection, and especially polished metal. Dashing to save the day, a hilarious scene in which the Doctor fogs up Toby's shiny necklace by blowing on it ensues, and it is the crew's newfound task to break all of the windows, and throw out all of the ship's prized treasure, much to Captain Avery's dismay.

Ultimately, after Rory's fate is sealed as he is thrown overboard, the Doctor deliberately makes small cuts into his, Amy's and Avery's palms, and they awake transported into a fresh, clinical room, where all of the crewmen are discovered ('Toby!' 'Rory!' 'The TARDIS!') The Doctor finally realizes that the 'siren' isn't an enemy, she is a doctor, appearing in human form in order to help and preserve the crew. After 'signing' a consent form, Amy is in full custody of Rory's wellbeing, and a brave decision from Avery to stay with his son, who is dying, occurs. Amy and the Doctor have to make a heartbreaking decision, in which Rory is dragged to the TARDIS despite his inability to breathe; if he were left on the ship, he could never leave.

Cleverly, but perhaps a little unrealistically, Amy manages to resuscitate Rory – much to the fans' delight, because Rory is a little well known for dying, nowadays. A tearful reunion changes course when Amy and Rory discuss what they have seen previously (the Doctor's own death) and a sense of what is to come brings with it a stony silence, leaving the audience in much suspense.

Overall, this episode is a bit of fun. It has some witty one-liners, some genuinely heartfelt moments, and a brave and brilliant atmosphere which must have been excruciating in its creation. Okay, so Rory's revival is a little predictable, and the siren is, for some, a cliché too far. But, in my opinion, *The Curse of the Black Spot* is a jovial jaunt that is a nice break from the more serious undertones of late. The music and effects are brilliant, even if the siren is a non-speaking character, and its angry flashes of red are brilliantly done.

Obviously, one cannot help but wonder if the whole concept of a 'pirate' story was a bit of an obvious one, and it seems as if the episode's purpose was to fill in the gaps of the series, paving the way for future events. However, I have since found out that Amy didn't get a black spot when she is hurt in the episode, though- one of the first signs that she is 'flesh'- which is an intriguing detail that would have gone unnoticed at the time.

> *"This [is] one of the most exhilarating, clichéd and (nearly) heart-breaking trips of their lives..."*

It is little pockets of continuity like this that make stories like this one work, and the supporting cast of the story really plays to its strengths. Hugh Bonneville's portrayal of the legendary Captain Avery is magnificent, especially in his scenes with the captain's son, and he had a small cameo appearance in later episode *A Good Man Goes to War*. Karen Gillan as Amy and Arthur Darvill as Rory are brilliant as their marriage is tested when Rory begins to fall for the siren's charms, and Amy's 'action shot' involving numerous stunts is really well formulated and carried out- one of this episode's unquestionable highlights.

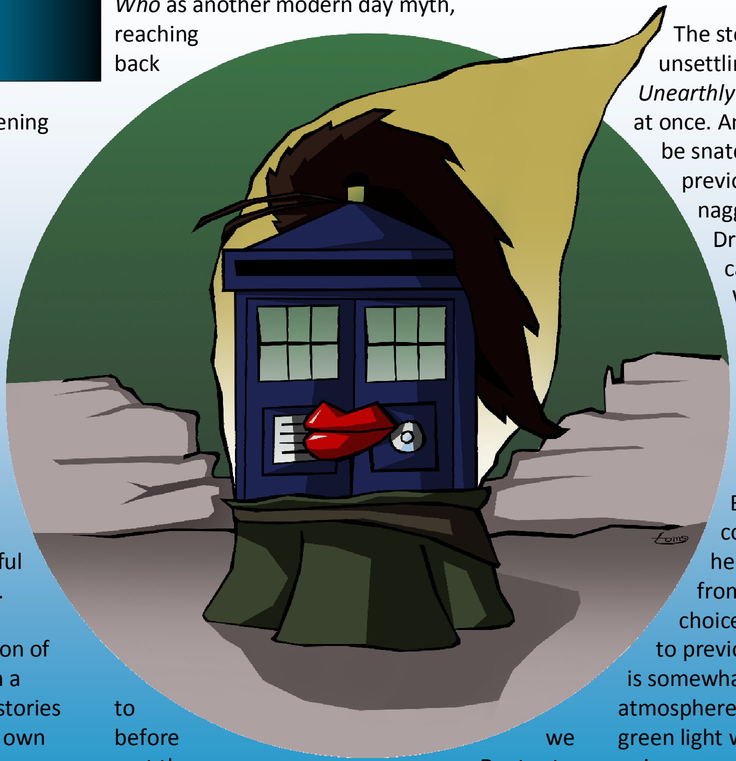
A small sequence involving an eye-patched woman talking to Amy is a hint of things to come, and I, for one, am immensely refreshed by this story, and also incredibly excited. So, Avast, me hearties, more adventures await! **7/10 [EJ]**

THE DOCTOR'S WIFE

EPISODE FOUR
Written: Neil Gaiman
Directed: Richard Clark

So far, so predictable. After the bold opening gambit *The Impossible Astronaut* was a typically clever Moffat two parter, all mysteries and fractured, puzzle box plotting and *The Curse of the Black Spot* only briefly delivered on the swash and buckle expected of pirates, the premise of the Siren neutering them. So *The Doctor's Wife*? Well, when's River Song going to pop up?

In some ways *The Doctor's Wife* is equally as predictable, what you'd expect when Gaiman met Moffat. From the former there's a modern Gothic setting with a twisted family, and a playful attitude towards the myths of the show. One of the trademarks of Gaiman's best known works has been the cannibalisation of myths and legends, recasting them from a different perspective and weaving new stories from them, retelling the stories with his own voice. Greek legends, Norse Gods, European fairytales and even the modern American mythology of superhero comics have all served Gaiman's purpose. And here he treats *Doctor Who* as another modern day myth, reaching back to before we met the Doctor to tell you that everything you thought you knew… well, it's not wrong but it isn't *quite* the full story.



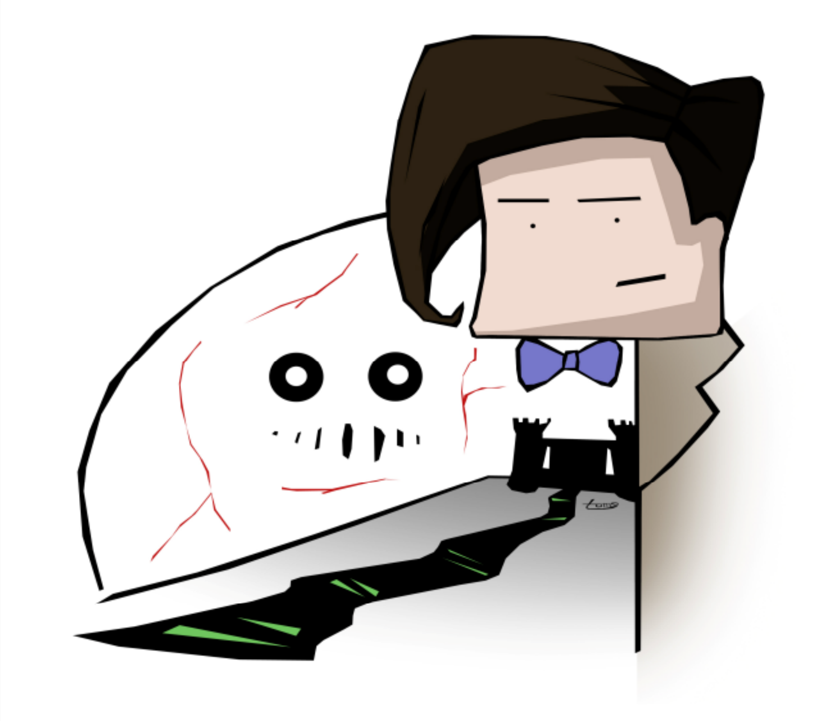
The story opens in an alien junkyard, an unsettling riff on the opening moments of *An Unearthly Child*. It's familiar and unfamiliar all at once. And the odd family unit we meet could be snatched out of a number of Gaiman's previous works – they reminded me naggingly of the inhabitants of The Dreaming from *The Sandman* in their casual cruelty and not quite humanity. We barely meet Idris before her soul gets destroyed and a new one installed – it's not immediately spelled out what the new soul is, but if you're watching carefully you can certainly make an educated guess. Adrian Schiller and Elizabeth Berrington are pitch perfect as a couple who aren't quite right in the head thanks to centuries of isolation from the rest of the universe, and the choice of making Cousin an Ood harks back to previous appearances where their servility is somewhat sinister. That whole unhealthy atmosphere is only emphasised by the sickly green light which permeates the unnamed pocket universe.

It's upon the Doctor's arrival (summoned by the Time Lord Emergency messaging system last seen in *The War Games*) where Moffat's influence is detectable – once the TARDIS lands and the Doctor, Amy and Rory are greeted by what appears to be a madwoman we're back to timey-wimey tricks. Idris greets the Doctor, Rory and Amy with what appear to be non-sequiturs, but if you pay close attention throughout the episode they make perfect sense in the context of later events. It's worth a re-watch just to see how deftly later events are dropped in, and how expertly Suranne Jones plays the scene. What appears to be insanity is played with purpose, that of a being who's saying the right things but not necessarily at the right time. It's a rare role where the usual practice of filming scenes out of order comes in as useful training.

It's a sign of how big *Who* has become in television terms that the biggest guest star of the season is relegated to voiceover work. Michael Sheen gets to play the villain of the week, but House is essentially a disembodied essence – I guess it makes a nice change from impersonating recent historical figures! Sheen's House is suitably unctuous, his calm, superior nature contrasting with the chaotic nature of the characters around him. His tormenting of Rory and Amy in the TARDIS corridors is perfectly in character, as sadistic as any Bond villain.

But House's TARDIS eating plot is merely the garnish to the real meat of the episode, the adventure that allows Gaiman to foreground what he really wants to do, and what makes the episode memorable. The heart of the episode is found in the scenes between the Doctor and Idris. In short order they give character and voice to the Doctor's oldest companion, and then provide a subtly different take on the Doctor's origins. It's not an entirely new concept in the wider *Who* universe – it's been touched on in one of *DWM's Brief Encounters* (*Time, Love and TARDIS*) and in Lawrence Miles' *Toy Story* from *Perfect Timing 2* – but it's new in context of the television show. And whilst it might have palled over four episodes in the show's original incarnation it works perfectly over the 45 minutes single-episode structure of twenty-first century *Who*. The episode's entire premise stands or falls on Matt Smith and Suranne Jones' performances in these scenes. Smith is as reliably excellent as we've come to expect but Jones is a revelation, banishing any memories of her Mona Lisa from *Sarah Jane Adventures* (I guess lots of paintings have a North…). In design and realisation Idris is reminiscent of the sort of role in which Tim Burton casts Helena Bonham-Carter, but the performance is good enough that it doesn't come across as a photocopy and even manages to be touching in a way that the female leads in more recent Burton movies rarely get to be.

All this without mentioning the wonderfully designed TARDIS graveyard, the *Blue Peter* designed steampunk console and return visit to a familiar old console room. For old school fans, it's a shame it couldn't be an even earlier version, but then those sets wouldn't stand up to the grandeur required of today's series. But it's churlish to nit-pick what's essentially a love letter to the series. A love letter, not only between the Doctor and his 'wife', but from a writer to one of his favourite modern myths. **9/10** [JA]



> *"The first and possibly most important problem with The Rebel Flesh is that it is incredibly generic."*

THE REBEL FLESH
EPISODE FIVE
Written: Matthew Graham
Directed: Julian Simpson

The premise of *The Rebel Flesh* seems interesting enough: the Doctor fights clone-people in the future, and they've got a clone of him up their sleeves. Sadly, the trailer fell short of my expectations, seeming quite generic in the wake of *The Doctor's Wife*. After seeing the episode itself, I was shocked – not at the episode, but at myself, for I had just discovered a *Doctor Who* adventure I didn't like.

The first and possibly most important problem with *The Rebel Flesh* is that it is incredibly generic. However, the setting, a near-future acid mine built inside of a monastery, is an original premise worthy of Robert Shearman. The main reason for this rather standard plot is that the people working in this mine are about as interchangeable as Sontarans, and give the experience the same interest of actually watching people mine. This type of story could've been greatly improved if it had been written in the refreshingly choppy style of *Terror Firma*, but instead the viewer is treated to a fast-paced affair which still feels monotonous. Once things start to go wrong, everything falls into place so predictably that I felt a sense of déjà vu.

Fittingly, *The Rebel Flesh* is almost a complete clone of *The Hungry Earth* and *Cold Blood*, a two-parter found in last year's season. In said two-parter, a group of humans living away from most of society are doing work involving digging into the ground. Due to their actions, these humans must face a group of humanoids which aren't aliens (in the case of *The Hungry Earth*, a group of Silurians). It seems like everyone can work out their differences peacefully, until one of the humans stupidly kills one of the humanoids, leading to a massive conflict between the two. *The Hungry Earth* and *Cold Blood* were much more complicated than *The Rebel Flesh*, though, as they featured more realistic characters and made room to allow more of Series Five's main arc to come into play. Such a story could be done well twice, and using this adventure as a starting point is all right, but such a copy would fare well several seasons after the original, when it would be seen as more of a nostalgic homage.

Another problem which makes *The Rebel Flesh* difficult to like is that it feels like a formulaically unoriginal form of science fiction. The characters have an obligatory nickname for their clones ('Gangers'), the TARDIS is thrown to Earth by some obligatory unexplained energy from the Sun, and the Doctor has so many obligatory secrets that he feels like the Seventh Doctor on steroids. The Flesh – programmable matter – is the science-fiction concept which the entire plot is meant to revolve around, but seems more like an underplayed Nestene Consciousness than the backbone of the story. The possibilities for Flesh technology are amazing, and a wide variety of better plots could stem from them, but here the Flesh is used only as a small component of the plot, while the story focuses on the Gangers.

After things have gone wrong and the Gangers gain their own free will, they're used in an attempt to create a sense of horror. They play records that their original selves liked for no reason other than to show that they are indeed clones. One character demonstrates that she is a Ganger by punching Rory, elongating their neck, and saying "Just let us live". Another says "We are living" before running away with a scream almost worthy of Mel. This is the point in which the Gangers are meant to be sympathetic. Halfway into the episode the theme changes from horror to ethical commentary, and while some stories, like *The Year of Intelligent Tigers* can pull off such a change, it just seems jarring here. The Gangers harp on about their memories and the concept that they're still humans, but it's hard to care about their existential plight when one of the humans stupidly kills one of the Gangers, leading to a massive conflict between the two. The remainder of the episode is spent building up to *The Almost People*, and it really shows. The non-Gangers hold up in the chapel, with the Gangers outside. Rory doesn't make it in because he needs to find a lost non-Ganger, and also because someone needs to be outside to further the plot. The story ends with an underwhelming twenty seconds of the Ganger Doctor before we see the trailer for *The Almost People*, which seems to have changed its mind and gone back to horror.

This story is misleading in that it ought to be good but isn't. It fails as a standalone story, it fails as horror or ethical commentary, it fails as an original story, and it fails as interesting science fiction. The elements which could redeem it are underplayed, the protagonists are bland, the antagonists do little other than play for sympathy, and the story itself can't make up its mind as to the theme it's trying to represent. This story is, overall, the only bad *Doctor Who* story that I have ever experienced. However, underplayed as they are, the redeeming elements still exist, and the setting provides some interest on its own. For this I give *The Rebel Flesh* it a 2/10. It's a bad story which manages to be far less than the sum of its parts, but some of those parts are still interesting in their own right, even if they're hardly shown. **2/10** [JJ]

THE ALMOST PEOPLE
EPISODE SIX
Written: Matthew Graham
Directed: Julian Simpson

Steven Moffat has noted that for the next season of *Doctor Who* he is disinclined to do any two-parters and I can't help but feel that this episode helped make that decision.

While *The Almost People* isn't terrible in and of itself, it generally is padding out time for the epic cliffhanger into the first-half-season finale. Having established in *The Rebel Flesh* that the humans are paranoid and prejudiced and the flesh-drones are dangerous if not evil, the plot pretty much turns into a runaround as the humans and the flesh alternate in gaining the upper hand. Most of this is covered up by the novel twist of a Two Doctors story featuring just the one incarnation, with Matt Smith's stereo Time Lord recalling Thompson and Thomson from Herge's *Tintin*. After a few moments at the start of the episode where it seems the Flesh Doctor will turn into an evil psychopath to lead the extremist Flesh to war... he calms down and spends the rest of the story making quips. Indeed, he ends up totally superfluous as it turns out that anything interesting the Flesh Doctor did turned out to be the original, even the apparently-forgotten sequence where the genuine article attacked Amy. Ultimately, even the suggestion that this clone of the Doctor might play a big role in future stories is never taken up, despite the fact it would have been fitting for Madame Kovarian to be defeated by her own weapon of choice.

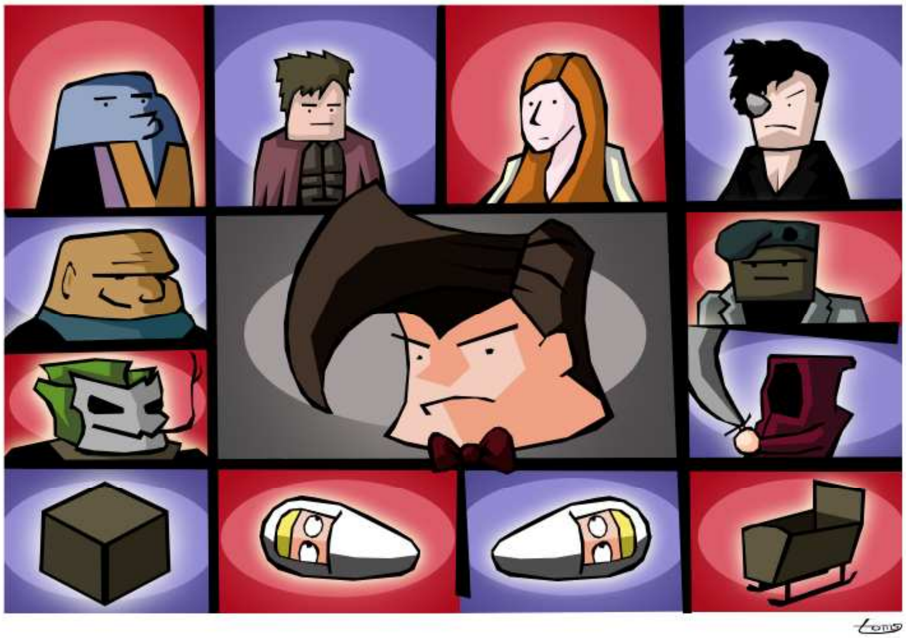
There are some good moments in the episode, but frustratingly they just repeat the previous installment. Yes, the crew and their duplicates think alike. Yes, the Flesh can turn into living nightmares at the drop of the hat. Yes, Amy is being stalked by the imaginatively-named Eye-patch Lady. Yes, the Doctor is up to something. There is nothing here that we didn't see last week, to the point where it seems like some *Little Britain*-style skit show with the same punchlines being done again and again – watch the Only Ganger In The Village Who Is A Lady turn into a monster and attack Rory. Repeatedly. Maybe this duplication and repetition is some metatextual satire and then again maybe it was just padding out the plot between cliffhangers…

Despite being two episodes long, there seem to be huge chunks of story missing. Where is the bit where Rory teams up with the Flesh? He says he'll help Jenny then we see him standing with the other clones, without any kind of explanation for how they know he's on their side. The Flesh confusing the real Doctor for the fake might be a subtle comment on the prejudice in the story, but it feels like a goof – rather like the fact that both Doctors are seen wielding sonic screwdrivers, despite the fact there is apparently only the one. The origin of the acid on the island, or why precisely anyone wanted to mine it in the first place, is also left unresolved.

The conclusion of the story is less impressive the more you think about it. After two weeks of moral grey areas, Jenny turns unambiguously evil – and turns into a Lazarus-type horse monster blob just in case we didn't notice – and tries to eat everyone. A string of coincidences get rid of characters so there are no doubles at the end of the story, with them being randomly eaten, shot, burnt and nobly sacrificing themselves while the Doctor goes to ridiculous lengths to provide a happy ending for the survivors. A child's father has died horribly? Here's his duplicate! What's that? You have an incurable brain tumor? The Doctor's got some medicine that will fix it!

Finally of course there is the revelation that Amy herself is a Flesh creature and has been ever since the season started (we never find out the exact details, or why the Doctor has waited nine months to make the vaguest of investigations), and the Doctor promptly nukes her. Now, I know the idea that Amy is a 'proper' duplicate and just her consciousness in some gloop rather than living gloop itself like the other gangers… but only because the author had to explain this in *Confidential* and not because this fact was obvious from the story itself. And given Amy's baby is so vitally important to their captors, shouldn't they be doing a bit more than leaving Amy in an iron lung with no kind of obstetric care bar making fun of her condition?

The Almost People feels very much like a blind alley, a road not taken as the powers that be decided they preferred a different story arc and dropped it like a hot brick. Perhaps we will see a future story showing the future of the gangers and the acid mines… but I doubt it. **5/10** [ECC]



A GOOD MAN GOES TO WAR
EPISODE SEVEN
Written: Steven Moffat
Directed: Peter Hoar

When is a finale not a finale? When it comes half way through the series, of course! *A Good Man Goes To War* punctuates the newfangled summer break with an episode which manages to feel epic, despite its complete lack of hoards of Daleks sweeping through the skies.

Rich in visuals of an assorted collection of places and times, from a futuristic battlefield to smoke-filled Victorian London, the sense of scale is heightened by the show looking inward, reviving familiar faces in a series of cameos that, in contrast to the similar technique in last year's *The Pandorica Opens* (which felt like an awkward family gathering), sees fully fledged characterisation coming to the fore. This time, rather than a parade of monsters pooling resources in a rather dubious job share with the Daleks and Cybermen, we get a Sontaran nurse with a warrior's bedside manner and the ability to lactate, and a Silurian Victorian crime-fighting lesbian lizard and her equally-handy-with-a-sword housemaid Jenny. If *A Good Man Goes To War* is remembered for nothing else then it will be for these characters who have deservedly taken fandom by storm, with Madame Vastra and Jenny in particular even mooted by Moffat as being potential spin-off material.

A feeling of scale is not only limited to what Jenny gets up to in bed, but in the way the episode focuses on the character of the Doctor. This is not something the programme is usually want to do in much depth, but here it seems justified, and perhaps even necessary. With Moffat's predisposition for playing up the Doctor's legend by sending monsters fleeing in fear just from the character's reputation potentially becoming a far too easy get-out clause, *A Good Man Goes To War* examines the negative consequences of such fame. We see the effect the Doctor has, not only on the armies waiting to battle him as they talk in hushed, respectful voices of his might and power, but also on his supposed friends: surely no-one in this episode is more terrified than when Dorium sees the police box and that bow-tied silhouette looming towards him as the Doctor returns to him to collect his favour.

> *"The Doctor himself is mortified when he realises that in many worlds he is recognised as being a ruthless one-man army..."*

The Doctor himself is mortified when he realises that in many worlds he is recognised as being a ruthless one-man army, his name synonymous with warrior. His cocksure bravado as he told the Vashta Narada to "look me up!", or sent the Atraxi scuttling away in fear, or the arrogance of his speech on Stonehenge, comes back to haunt

The Doctor himself is mortified when he realises that in many worlds he is recognised as being a ruthless one-man army, his name synonymous with warrior. His cocksure bravado as he told the Vashta Narada to "look me up!", or sent the Atraxi scuttling away in fear, or the arrogance of his speech on Stonehenge, comes back to haunt him as the truth behind River Song's identity is finally revealed, in what Moffat described as being a "game-changing cliffhanger" in pre-broadcast publicity, but to which a lot of fans responded with a feeling of... is that it?

The episode ends dramatically with the revelation that River is Amy and Rory's daughter, but I strongly believe the family connection is a petty footnote, and wrongly misinterpreted by some. The twist isn't that River is Melody Pond in itself, but what that ultimately reveals about River: that she is the little girl with Time Lord DNA who has been brainwashed and manipulated by Madame Kovarian to become a weapon against a violent warrior. To really give the impact that deserved, the episode should have ended with River following up the words, "I am your daughter", with, "...and I was raised as the Doctor's executioner". Though of course, it would still have been upstaged by the placard announcing that "The Doctor will be back in *Let's Kill Hitler*", surely the sluttiest and most misleading episode title since... well, since *The Doctor's Wife*, three weeks earlier, I suppose.

Overall, *A Good Man Goes To War* is fascinating for being an exploration of the consequences of the Doctor's actions, and memorable for including a host of memorable characters and humour, including *Doctor Who*'s second only oral sex gag (and first to not feature paving slabs). Although it seemed to successfully fuel the speculation over the summer months, I'm interested in whether having such a bombastic episode mid-series will work when the series is viewed again on Blu-Ray, and whether any of the River Song arc holds up once all the secrets have been revealed. But in a way it doesn't matter; when the episodes have this much colour and verve, there's always enough spectacle to make them worthwhile. **7/10** [NB]

LET'S KILL HITLER
EPISODE EIGHT
Written: Steven Moffat
Directed: Richard Senior

HELLO! MY NAME IS NEEBOR!!
MISSING

So begins the second half of the Series Six of the second run of *Doctor* Who. Season 6B, if you like – there's always got to be a Season 6B, it seems. From the reveal of the title back in June, I'd been hugely looking forward to this episode, expecting some mad romp in history. That's certainly what we got, although it didn't play out as I expected in might. To be honest, I'm not sure anyone could have predicted this bizarre sequence of events. I'd been expecting, not unreasonably, an episode about Hitler. However, Hitler's presence is entirely arbitrary. The episode, with very little modification, could have taken place in virtually any period of history. Steven Moffat has defended his use of "tarty titles," and *Let's Kill Hitler* is just that – a title designed to reel the viewer in, not describe the story. No matter, Hitler did provide some top comedy moments. Having perhaps the most despised dictator in history as a villain might have been a bit much for a teatime family show; treating Hitler as a figure of fun, in the grand tradition of British comedy, works better. Just how long did Hitler stay in that cupboard? Perhaps they could do a sequel in which they go back and let him out. It could be called *Back to the Führer.*

What this episode was really all about is furthering the ongoing plot, something that it managed more than all this year's previous episodes combined. The rapid, unpredictable nature of the surface plot allows a great deal of exposition to slip in under the radar. While we enjoyed the hastily created crop circles, brilliantly realized shape-shifting robots and Action Rory punching out Nazis, we learned the true nature of the Silence – a religious sect, not merely the greys seen in *The Impossible Astronaut*; details of how Rory and Amy got together – just barely, by the looks of it; and, of course, a great deal about Melody/River Song.

Nina Toussaint-White is excellent as young Mels. Dangerous, sexy and a bit annoying – I should have realized she was River. But really, who saw that coming? Undoubtedly the most unexpected regeneration since, oh, the last one. There are some lovely conceits to Melody's life; she gets her own parents together, and she's named after herself. Nonetheless, the character of Mels is clumsily shoehorned in. Shouldn't Amy and Rory have mentioned her at least once before? And just what was she doing in the years between her regeneration in New York and her attending school in Leadworth, apart from presumably ageing very, very slowly? Still, at least now we have proof that regeneration isn't limited to one skin tone, and we even have a cheeky explanation for Alex Kingston's ageing running in the opposite direction to River's.

There are still huge questions that need answering, not least of which is the nature of the huge Question that needs answering. Why do the Silence want to know, and why do they want the Doctor dead? The exact nature of the Doctor's upcoming murder remains a mystery, as does River's involvement – what's she playing at, considering that she presumably remembers what was happening to her as a child in 1969? Who, or what, is behind the Justice Department, scouring history to punish the wicked?

The triumph of the episode is in making all this secondary to a rip-roaring, if quite absurd and over-the-top plot. The fantastic performances go a long way to achieving this. I'll single out two – the fabulously named Ezekiel Wigglesworth as the incredibly cute young Rory, and Matt Smith as the Doctor. Smith manages to combine a talent for physical comedy with some real pathos, as the Doctor, having dressed for the occasion, strives to save his friends, facing down death with nothing but a sonic cane to lean on (I want one of those). It's easy to see how River would be moved to overcome her conditioning, and begin the path to becoming something more to the Doctor. While I wouldn't want every episode to be this overblown and silly, *Let's Kill Hitler* provides a storming season opener. **8/10** [DT]

NIGHT TERRORS
EPISODE NINE
Written: Mark Gatiss
Directed: Richard Clark

After the missed opportunity that had been *Let's Kill Hitler*, Mark Gatiss' *Night Terrors* came as a breath of fresh air.

It was lovely to have for once a story which was not, barring the further notification of the Doctor's 'death' at the climax of the episode, a stand-alone story not connected to a complex (and it must be stated utterly boring) arc or ramming down our throats the fact that River Song is really Rory's and Amy's daughter. All this largely irrelevant conjecture is slowing the season down to a level of tedium not seen since 1987; and it was wonderful to be free of it for once.

My one concern regarding the story was that it was written by Mark Gatiss. Gatiss is something of an erratic writer having written the superb, almost Holmesian *The Unquiet Dead* in 2005, the missed opportunity that was *The Idiot's Lantern* in 2006 and quite possibly the worst Dalek story since *The Chase* (1966) in *Victory of the Daleks* (2010), although for all that, *The Idiot's Lantern* was saved by Maureen Lipman's superb Wire and *Victory* by Ian McNiece's endearing Winston Churchill and Bill Patterson's likeable Dr Bracewell.

Here we are not quite so lucky, as only Jamie Oram as the terrified George gives us a wonderfully memorable performance. Casting director Andy Prior has a remarkable ability to find and cast superb young actors of genuine talent, and Jamie Oram is almost equal to the superb Caitlin Blackwood, who stole our hearts last season as young Amelia Pond. Much was made of Emma Cuniffe playing George's mother. Yet, as with Thelma Barlow playing Lady Thaw in director Richard Clark's previous *Doctor Who* story *The Lazarus Experiment* (2007), here we have a known and accomplished actress in a role so minor, which any rank-and-file Equity card holding actress could have played.

The one thing about modern *Doctor Who* which is unlike the classic series is that it's contemporary Earthbound stories do have a foot in the real world. As with the crime writers of the golden age of the 1920s and 1930s, Classic Who writers would not have dreamt of setting a story on a council estate or in a tower block; that change came with the later novels of Margery Allingham. As with the classic crime novel, the crime and the murderer were serpents in an upper- or middle-class paradise just as an alien invasion always took place in the middle-class Home Counties.

The London tower block in which George and his parents live is rundown and graffiti smitten, a sort of twenty-first century Paradise Towers, amusingly described by Amy as *'Planet Eastenders'*. The council refuse to do anything about making putting out dustbins easier, a problem which worries the elderly and slightly arthritic Mrs Rossiter and a very real problem in twenty-first century Britain.

The family's landlord, the seedy Purcell who lives with his bulldog Bernard, is perhaps the modern-day equivalent of 1960s slum landlord Peter Rachmann, gently threatening Alex for his rent and soon to be the centre point of two of the story's silliest scenes.

Initially we are led to believe that George suffers from pantyphobia and is scared of everything to such an extent that Alex and Claire have to turn out his lights five times. The child's fears are so great that his message *'please save me from the monsters'* reaches the TARDIS. A bemused Alex believes the Doctor to be from social services and thus the help that he and Claire had been seeking.

Matt Smith has been the one consistent point in what has so far been a very mediocre season, and here he is again on top form. In *Night Terrors* the Doctor is everything we have come to expect here: inquisitive, eccentric, caring and compassionate. He succeeds in getting through to George where others appear to have failed, bonding with George, who fears that his parents will abandon him, and exuding vital reassurance to the frightened youngster.

The story does rather rely upon cliché. The fact that George is an alien is most unlikely and something of a cop-out. The perception filter is wheeled out yet again and this is becoming rather tiresome, although I suppose that Gatiss could get another story out of it as the Doctor promises to *"Come back at puberty, always a difficult time"* as a perception filter is, after all, a piece of technology and technology can break down, so what if Alex and Claire finally get to see what their 'little boy' actually looks like, particularly considering that Claire doesn't know that her 'son' is an alien, it could make a rather good morality play.

The oddest character in the story is Leila Hoffman's Mrs Rossiter. George is supposedly scared of her because he thinks she is a witch. This being the case, would it not have been better to cast someone who looks suitably witch-like? One thinks of the wonderful Janet Henfrey who played Miss Hardaker in 1989's *The Curse of Fenric*, who does rather put one in mind of Margaret Hamilton from *The Wizard of Oz*. Mrs Rossiter has no fear factor at all, she is just a frail old lady who has to struggle with her bins every week and who doesn't exude the slightest bit of menace. Indeed once she finds herself in the darkened corridors of the Doll's House she exhibits more apprehension than the Doctor, Amy, Rory, Purcell and Alex put together. It does seem rather unlikely that the Doctor and Alex enter the Doll's House via the wardrobe as is to be expected, yet Mrs Rossiter is sucked in via a pile of rubbish bags in the forecourt of the flats; this seems even less likely than Purcell being sucked in via his carpet and is yet another glaring example of Gatiss' over-reliance on cliché.

It would have been interesting to know precisely where George and the dolls for that matter came from, as he must have extraordinary powers to be able to enlarge the dolls. The dolls themselves were magnificent and their eerie pleas of *'We just want to play'* were suitably creepy thanks to director Richard Clark's superb direction and Ailsa Berk's brilliant choreography.

Again, we have yet another cliché with Rory and Amy being separated from the Doctor as they enter the Doll's House via the lift to the flats. Is it just me or is Rory, apart from being a walking death wish, becoming rather superfluous as he seems to spend most of his time looking bemused throughout the episode. Here it is Amy who becomes the investigator, like Purcell before her turning into a doll, in a scene which comes over as suitably creepy if a little far fetched.

Night Terrors could have worked almost as well as a Doctor-lite episode as there is little need for the TARDIS crew to be there, other than to explain the bizarre events as it transpires that it is George's fears which are amplifying the dolls, and the fact that when he calms down things return to normal, which is a rather disappointing and clichéd ending to a wonderful idea which is almost worthy of the Tara King era of *The Avengers* at its best. What spoils this scene is Alex's tearful bonding with his son. There is something about Daniel May's acting here that doesn't smack of a father relieved that his son's agony is finally over.

> *"It would have been interesting to know precisely where George and the dolls for that matter came from, as he must have extraordinary powers to be able to enlarge the dolls."*

May's display of emotion just comes over as an actor going through the motions rather than a father sobbing with relief. Why Mays is held in such esteem I shall never know, as I have seen better acting in local amateur dramatic productions. He is quite possibly the worst actor to appear in any of the otherwise superb Richard Clark's four *Doctor Who* stories of which it is to be hoped this will not be the last,

It has been lovely to have an episode with, for once, no mention of River Song/Melody Pond, links to overblown story arcs etc. so it is a great shame that the ending to the story is a reminder of the Doctor's 'death' date even if accompanied by eerie children's voices.

Okay, so *Night Terrors* isn't the best story ever and the links to *Fear Hear* (2006) and PJ Hammond's *Sapphire and Steel* are obvious, but it was certainly one of the best stories of a mediocre and rather boring season. Thankfully, the very best was yet to come. **8/10** [GP]

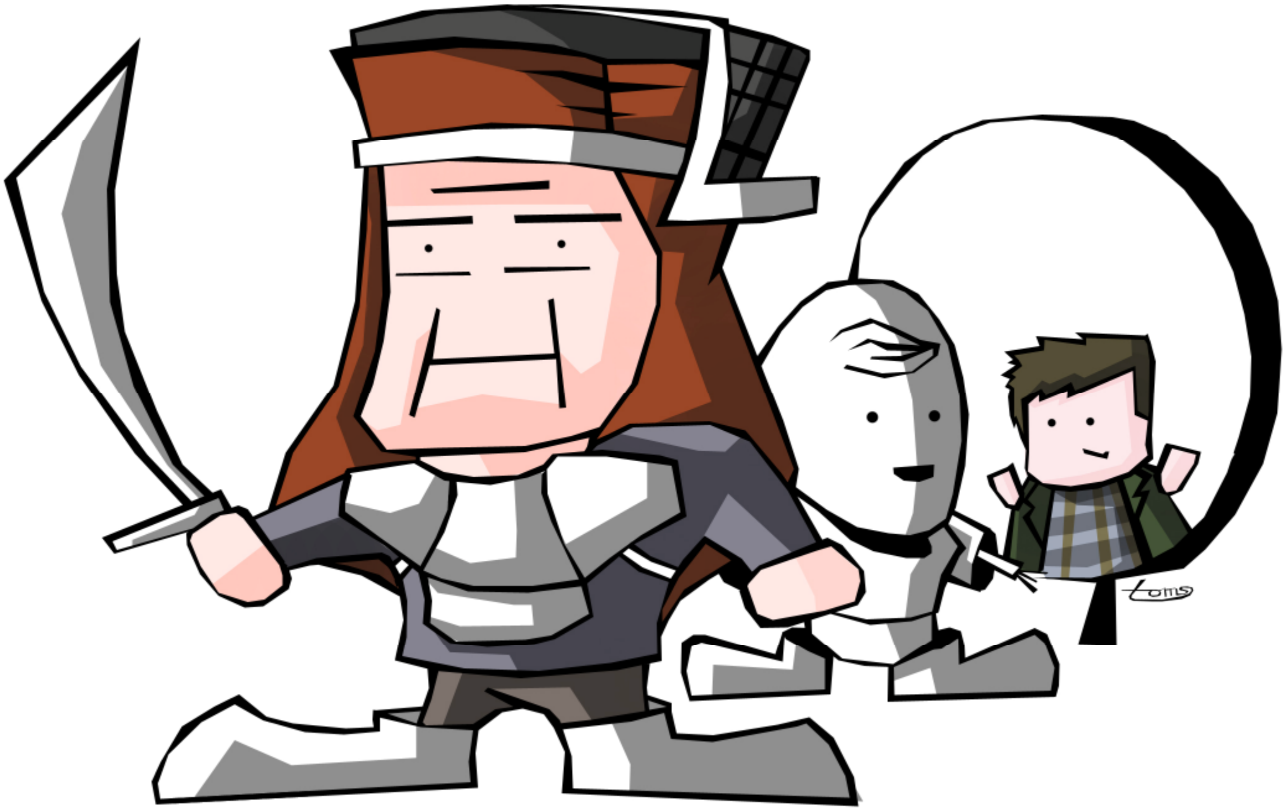
THE GIRL WHO WAITED
EPISODE TEN
Written: Tom MacRae
Directed: Nick Hurran

The Girl Who Waited. Focusing largely on Amy, and, in turn, her relationship with her long-suffering husband Rory, this episode is a real tear-jerker. Exploring both the complicated and emotionally deep issues of morality, and the Doctor's ability to rewrite time, it realizes the effects of a paradox in a dramatic and pleasingly clever way. However, just what is it that makes this story just so intelligent, whilst remaining, ultimately, entertaining?

Set upon the planet of Apalapucia, the 'top holiday destination' which, let's face it, was unlikely to live up to its reviews, the tale begins with the news that the planet has a plague, Chen7. Which could kill them all in a day. Nice. Amy becomes trapped in an alternate reality – one with an accelerated time stream – due to pressing the wrong button when it came to opening the door. Although seemingly unlikely (why would Amy press the second button? Nobody would do that!), this minor plot point is the key to unlocking the adventure's ultimate premise – what will Rory do, when faced with choosing to save an Amy thirty-six years older than the one he married, or saving the version of Amy from his own time stream? Could he save both? Should he?

Of course, there had to be an alien in the story, and this comes in the form of the robotic 'handbots'. Futuristic enough, if a little plain. Their purpose is to protect the visitors aboard the ship, who have been infected with the alien 'plague', by carrying out little acts of 'kindness'; such as injecting them with medicine. Sweet. Of course, this could kill Amy and Rory, as they are aliens on this planet. It is these robots that are the root cause of some of the episode's funniest moments, including a scene in which Rory is knocked unconscious. I know: it's always Rory. However, it is actually him that becomes the hero of the hour. Armed with the Doctor's sonic screwdriver and a pair of super nerdy camera glasses, Rory explores the complex on the Doctor's orders, and comes across an aged version of Amy, the woman he had been looking at through a mirror only minutes ago.

I feel that now is the right point at which to congratulate Karen Gillan and Arthur Darvill on what is possibly one of the series' most beautifully played scenes. Upon finding Amy, alongside a robot she has quite aptly named 'Rory', the two have a heart-to-heart, in which older Amy refuses to help find her younger self. She knows that, if she does so, she will be erased



from time forever. Following a conversation with her younger self through a mirror (as you do), this tender and heartbreaking moment leads to a change of heart. Although older Amy remembers having the conversation as her younger self, young Amy now makes her change her mind – by asking her to consider Rory.

This conversation perfectly sums up Rory's and Amy's marriage and commitment, and leads to the Doctor agreeing to save both of the Amys – the clause in the contract, if you will – hence creating a paradox. The scene in which both Amys exist together is perfectly (and hilariously) mastered, and a fight scene involving older Amy battling a selection of well coordinated handbots is impressive. However, the real sucker punch is the beautiful moment in which older Amy decides, finally, to remain in the complex, hence saving her younger self. The scene in which Amy and Rory are separated by the TARDIS doors, and hold their hands to the glass, whilst tears run down Rory's face, is phenomenal. The Doctor was never going to save both versions of Amy – he couldn't. Rory's sense of loss is only heightened by older Amy's cries of 'if you love me, don't let me in.' Sheer genius.

> *"The in-joke referencing the Doctor's fez provides some light relief to an otherwise emotionally heavy story..."*

Of course, this episode involves Karen Gillan in prosthetics, which is not an ideal situation. I, for one, agree with the critics that said she should, at least, have had cropped or slightly grey hair. However, apart from going forward in Karen Gillan's own time stream, unfortunately a practical impossibility, this was the best possible outcome, and much better than the original plan of casting an older actress to play older Amy. In fact, Gillan adopts a slightly adapted voice and stance, which allows her acting ability to truly shine through. The clinical set is convincing, and the garden scenes are particularly sumptuous, adding to the episode's believability. Arthur Darvill's portrayal of Rory in this episode really demonstrates his naivety and devotion to Amy quite beautifully. The Doctor is actually quite insensitive in this episode, adding another dimension to Matt Smith's spectacularly commanding Doctor, and the ending, in which young Amy asks where older Amy is, is well played.

Tom MacRae's script is elegant as well as practical, and the in-joke referencing the Doctor's fez provides some light relief to an otherwise emotionally heavy story. The soundtrack to this tale is as apt as ever, and provides a suitably touching backdrop to a tale of epic proportions. Of course, the story is by no means original, and paradoxes have been explored in *Doctor Who* before. Yet, what is new is the extent the paradox affects the series' central characters, and all three truly grow because of the events of this episode. Consequently, this story can be seen as no less than pivotal, and the script is a true testament to the superb acting ability of all three co-stars.

In conclusion, *The Girl Who Waited* has it all: real emotion, heightened drama, and some pointless, faceless robots to boot. I, for one, cannot wait for the series' finale, which promises to be, by the looks of it, one of the best yet. **8/10** [EJ]

THE GOD COMPLEX

EPISODE ELEVEN
Written: Toby Whithouse
Directed: Nick Hurran

Let me begin this by saying that *The God Complex* is very much in the style of Series Five's *Amy's Choice*. However, since it could be compared to so many other episodes and audio dramas I could probably waste the rest of this space naming them. To give an idea, here are a few of them: anything by Rob Shearman, *Absolution*, *Caerdroia* and *Conundrum*.

This adventure could easily have been for *Amy's Choice* what *The Rebel Flesh* was for *The Hungry Earth* – a knockoff. However, while the plotline isn't perfect, it is certainly original. The sets are great in a low-budget way which fills me with nostalgia for old Tom Baker stories like *Full Circle* and *The Ark in Space*. The soundtrack is good, and it stayed in the foreground in a way reminiscent of *Something Inside*'s four-beat tapping. The editing is so masterful at cutting away low-octane moments that it may even succeed *Terror Firma*, although the special effects leave something to be desired.

Without giving away any details, the plot is alright. As a writer and fan, I often see wasted potential even in amazing stories, but here I had a sense that although the story lived up to its potential it still wasn't high-quality. With the title *The God Complex* I wasn't entirely sure what to expect, but about halfway in, religion entered the piece. Religion is a strong point for me, but I managed to grit my teeth and get through those sections relatively unscathed.

This story is, in a way, the antithesis of *Journey's End* – you can have a good idea of what's going on, but it's still interesting. You can see the resolution coming if you've seen *The Curse of Fenric*, but the ending itself is a bit unexpected, and in a vaguely anticlimactic way. I didn't feel, in the slightest, that this was a lead-in to the season finale. Instead, it felt like the sorrowful end of Act I, with Act II's entertainments still to come.

One of the only misused elements in the episode is the emphasis of the shots. It's happening all too often, now – the episodes try to be frightening by lingering on certain details. In the right environment and total immersion into the story, this can lead to anticipation. In many cases, though, it simply leads to impatience, and a feeling that the masterful editing should've lingered here a bit longer.

The antagonist falls into the same vein as many others in this season; it's interesting until you understand what it is, at which point it seems a bit unoriginal. It does well as a sympathetic character towards the end, although we have the Martha-Hath issue of the Doctor being able to understand it and parroting back all its dialogue.

The supporting characters, well, they're interesting, although they're not developed and one of them is such a blatant comedy character that I'd expect him in "Bang-Bang-a-Boom" instead of something so somber. In fact, I don't need to include any details on this character because you, dear reader, will know exactly who I'm talking about when you see the episode.

And that's the thing – I want you to see this episode. It's not perfect, but it's worth your time, and the good points really stand out. Just don't expect the quality of *Amy's Choice* or *Turn Left*. **6/10** [JJ]

CLOSING TIME
EPISODE TWELVE

Written: Gareth Roberts
Directed: Steve Hughes

Closing Time is a remarkable piece of *Doctor Who*. In a season which has been overly dark with very little warmth and few likeable characters it stands out like a shining light. It is also the making of Gareth Roberts as a writer. *The Shakespeare Code* (2007) was unremarkable, the least said about *The Unicorn and the Wasp* (2008) the better, but last year's *The Lodger* proved that Roberts' skill is not as a pure sci-fi author but as a writer of charming trifles and vignettes wherein the sci fi element is negligible; *Closing Time* is a superb example of this sort of charmingly low-key writing at which Roberts excels.

The success of *Closing Time* lies not just with Roberts' delightful script but also in the superb direction of former Ashington College graduate Steve Hughes, who brought to the story the same charm and subtlety he brought to the BBC1 wartime drama *Land Girls*. One hopes that he will return to *Doctor Who* in the near future.

Okay, so comparisons with *Rose* (2005) seem inevitable at first as lights being to flicker in the Sanderson and Grainger Department Store in Colchester and yes, just as Autons were lurking in the basement of a department store in *Rose*, so there are Cybermen lurking in the basement of Sanderson and Grainger. Now it is here that Roberts' writing goes a little awry as we learn that the Cybermen have been trapped beneath the basement of the shop for centuries, so one would expect these Cybermen to look more like their *The Tenth Planet* (1966) counterparts, regardless of how cheap such design would look today. That said it is nice to have 'proper' Cybermen for a change and not the Cybus versions.

One wonders why the Cybermen have lain dormant beneath the department store building for thousands of years. In that time buildings would have come and gone and Colchester took quite a battering during the Second World War, so how is it possible that in the laying of foundations of various buildings over the years no-one had ever come across a cybership?

Apparently 200 years have passed since the Doctor said farewell to Amy and Rory at the end of *The God Complex*, and as the time of his 'death' draws near the Doctor is on a so-called farewell tour and pays a visit to his old friend Craig, played once again with beautifully naïve subtlety by James Corden. Craig is now a father to Alfie and his partner Sophie has gone away for the weekend so that Craig can prove that he has the makings of a good dad, although until the Doctor's arrival this is a negligible claim. Indeed, Daisy Haggard as Sophie was as much a part of *The Lodger*'s success as was Corden, so to have her here going away in the pre-credit sequence is both a great shame and a waste of a fine character and superb actress.

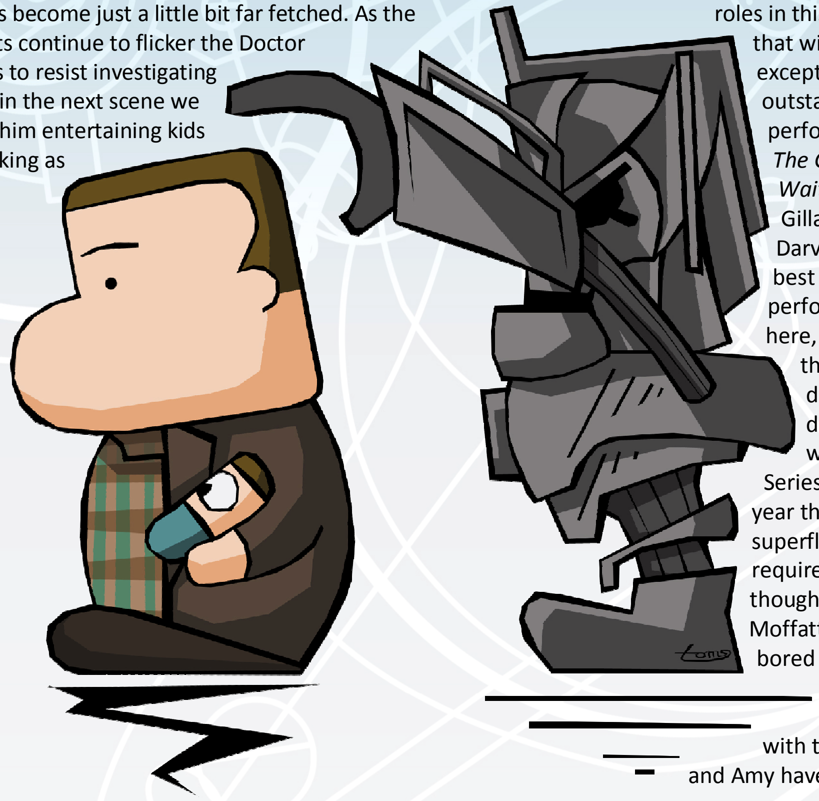
For all that, Matt Smith and James Corden work brilliantly together. Their scenes are a highlight of this mediocre season. Indeed, it would be lovely to see them do a comedy show together as Smith brings out the best in Corden far more than his failed comic partnership with his *Gavin and Stacy* partner Matthew Horne ever did. Failing that, one hopes that James Corden will come back for a third bite of the cherry next season.

Matt Smith has been a reliable constant in this dark and rather average season and the Eleventh Doctor is at his eccentric best here. He expresses his dislike of Craig's redecorated house bringing back memories of the Second Doctor's (to whom the Eleventh Doctor has often been compared): "*I see you've been doing the TARDIS up a bit... I don't like it!*" from *The Three Doctors* (1973).

We know from *A Good Man Goes To War* that the Doctor can interpret baby talk and that Alfie would prefer to be called Stormgarten, or 'Stormie' as the Doctor refers to him, and that Alfie has a pretty low opinion of his dad. The Doctor succeeds in relating to the baby far better than Craig has done. It is from here that the story does become just a little bit far fetched. As the lights continue to flicker the Doctor tries to resist investigating but in the next scene we see him entertaining kids working as an assistant in Sanderson and Grainger's toy department!!!

The question here is how much time has elapsed since the Doctor bid farewell to Craig in the previous scene, as he is well known to the staff and has worked undercover in the toy department for quite some time. Also, one wonders why the Doctor is using his title here. Has nobody ever asked why somebody called 'Doctor' is working as a shop assistant or asked the question which can never be answered 'Doctor Who?' Surely the Doctor should have wheeled out his John Smith alias? This is, however, a minor quibble as it is here we first encounter Lynda Barron as warm-hearted gossipy shop assistant Val, a cameo role with star quality. She misinterprets the Doctor's reference to Craig as his 'partner' telling him *'There's no need to be coy about it these days'*. As I said earlier. Craig and Val are the only two characters this season who have displayed any warmth and about whom it is genuinely possible to care. It is this which lifts *Closing Time* from being a charming vignette, the calm before the storm of *The Wedding of River Song*, to being an understated masterpiece!!!

The Doctor sees Rory and Amy in the distance, and Amy giving her autograph to a little girl before he looks up and sees her as the face of an advert for Petrichor Perfume 'For The Girl Who's Tired Of Waiting' which means that Amy has obviously found fame as a model or some such, and it is to be hoped that this will be elaborated upon in the Christmas special. However, the fact that we see them only briefly in non-speaking roles in this story means that with the exception of their outstanding performances in *The Girl Who Waited* Karen Gillan and Arthur Darvill give their best performances here, helped by the fact they don't have any dialogue. Both were superb in Series Five, but this year they seem superfluous to requirements, as though Steven Moffatt has become bored with them or doesn't know what to do with them. Rory and Amy have their new



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As Craig begins to ‘investigate’ he doesn’t make a very good job of it. In an amusing scene in which he asks a young shop assistant Kelly (Holly Dempsey) to ‘tell him about ladies underwear’, bringing him to attention of security guard George, it is only the Doctor’s timely arrival which prevents him from being arrested!!! It is in scenes such as this that the combination of superb writing, fine acting and brilliant direction bring out the warmth and strength of characterisation which has been missing from the season as a whole. It also features Radio One DJ Matt Edmondson as a customer buying lingerie, but this cameo is hardly worth mentioning.

However, it is easy to be lulled into a false sense of security by these scenes as Val refers to “the silver rat thing” as we see a cybermat whiz across the shop floor. The design of these cybermats is superb, owing much to their début design in *The Tomb of the Cybermen* (1967) and being much better than their previous appearance in *Revenge of the Cybermen* (1975). Val’s statement that she wanted to buy one for her nephew is perhaps the most subtle form of product placement, as they are a character options model waiting to happen!

It seems very odd that the Cybermen would merely knock the Doctor out and not attempt to capture or kill him at this stage. Yet Craig, with Alfie in tow, decides that he is safer with the Doctor, and leaving Alfie with Val goes after the Time Lord. It is here that Roberts and Hughes jerk us out of our sense of cosiness as the Cybermen capture Craig and then heighten the tension as for a moment we genuinely believe that Craig has been converted into a Cyberman. Unfortunately it is then that, after this superbly tense and emotional build up, Roberts lets the side down as we hear Alfie crying in Val’s arms and the solution to this Cyber-invasion-in-waiting is consigned to the realms of cop-out and stupidity.

In the past we have been told that the Cybermen were only vulnerable to gold, yet since the JN-T years they seem to have become increasingly easy to defeat. Yet defeat by the Doctor telling Craig that his willpower and his love for Alfie – the chance to prove that he is a good dad – causes the Cybermen to lose their grip on their suppressed emotions, is the most ridiculous and unlikely method of beating these cybernetic villains we have witnessed in 45 years of Cyber-history. Perhaps Roberts had become stuck for an idea by which to resolve the Cyberman threat. If this is the case then it is a great shame, as the sight of Cybermen marching through a busy department store could have provided the season with a scene as iconic as them marching down the steps of St Paul’s in *The Invasion* (1968). Hughes certainly has the skill to pull off what would have been such an iconic scene if only Roberts had bothered to write it rather than selling out. Considering that the Cybermen claim that the energy they have siphoned from the power lines would have given them enough power to convert the human race such a scene would have been viable. Alas, it was not to be.

If this story has a fault it is that Roberts has used too many cop-outs or easy solutions to solve problems or tie up matters. Another – in Moffat-like fashion – is the Doctor using time travel to call out a glazier to repair the window smashed when he jumped through it, and to tidy up the house just as Sophie returns.

We do learn, however, where the Doctor acquired the Stetson he wore in the first few minutes of *The Impossible Astronaut*, as it was given to him by Craig, who in turn was presented it by his friend Shaun.

The charming vignette ends as the Doctor embarks on one final trip, watched by a trio of enquiring kids, before we are rapidly transported to the far future to witness the capture of the newly-created Doctor River Song, by the increasingly pantomimesque Madam Kovarian, who is placed in an astronaut suit ready to rise from the lake and kill the Doctor. It would be interesting to know if Hughes actually directed this dark and intriguing scene or whether it was directed by Jeremy Webb on the set of *The Wedding of River Song*.

Closing Time will never be regarded as a classic. The clumsy use of the Cybermen will ensure that, but as a charming vignette suffused with warmth and humour in a very undercooked season it was a breath of fresh air for which Gareth Roberts, Steve Hughes, Matt Smith, James Corden and Lynda Barron deserve full credit. Whilst it’s certainly not a classic, it is definitely a miniature masterpiece. A shining light in far too dark a season. **9/10** [GP]

THE WEDDING OF RIVER SONG
EPISODE THIRTEEN
Written: Steven Moffat
Directed: Jeremy Webb

Pterodactyls terrorising small children, Winston Churchill as Holy Roman Emperor and Mark Gatiss eaten alive by cannibalistic skulls: you have to wonder if this was Moffat going through a checklist of a world he’d love to live in.

2011 has seen one of the more divisive series of *Doctor Who* broadcast, but even those viewers who remained stony-faced whenever River Song showed up, or sighed and glanced at their watch every time there was another reference to the Doctor’s impending death, must surely have grinned seeing the beautifully bonkers beginning to *The Wedding of River Song*. With its plethora of stunning shots of steam trains running through the London Gherkin, cars floating on hot air balloons, and Roman Centurions waiting patiently at traffic lights, Moffat exploits one of the most unique traits *Doctor Who* has to offer: anachronistic fantasy.

Considering last year’s *The Big Bang* also began with a surrealistic bubble universe (where stars didn’t exist), there’s a blueprint forming to a Moffat-written finale. Other ingredients include taking advantage of the programme’s expanded universe by including the odd familiar face (or in Dorium’s case, head), then featuring locations reminiscent of the darker settings from *Star Wars* full of strange aliens in shady bars, and gothic cobwebbed underground tombs which would give Indiana Jones the heeby-jeebies. With only a few brushstrokes Moffat expands the *Doctor Who* universe, these glimpses suggesting characters, history, and – in the case of Live Chess – a culture of horrific snuff entertainment, well beyond the few short minutes we see them on screen.

Despite frequent complaints that this series has been too complicated, *The Wedding of River Song* is, like most Moffat scripts, a simple plot told from the inside out: the Doctor goes to meet his death with a trick up his sleeve and is thwarted by River, whose love is so strong she damns time to hell to keep him alive. The much discussed ‘series arc’ is misnamed, I feel, as the ongoing storyline wasn’t developed in each episode. A better term for it would have been ‘deferred plot resolutions’; resolutions which shrug off accusations of complexity when the answers turned out to be disappointingly straightforward.

Did these reveals surprise anyone? Weren't we meant to suspect that River killed the Doctor back in *Flesh and Stone*? Wasn't it always going to be a coin toss between whether the Doctor escaped death using a Ganger clone or the Teselecta? And the heavy implication in *Silence in the Library* that the Doctor would end up marrying River was one I brazenly assumed was a red herring for three years. I was wrong.

Thankfully the Doctor and River kissed, time flowed onwards, and with it I mellowed in my thinking. Sometimes there is a lot of joy in knowing how something is going to turn out and then seeing it happen. Plus it is somewhat satisfying revisiting the earlier River Song episodes with the knowledge that those hints eventually come true. If Moffat had pulled some double bluffs it would perhaps have momentarily surprised me and a few other forumites, but thankfully we have a head writer who is smart enough to know that when telling non-linear stories it's more effective to keep the elements simple and the plots guessable.

(Though so saying, does it count that River married the Teselecta, and that the Doctor didn't *actually* tell her his name? Despite the fact that she obviously knows it by *Silence in the Library*, of course. Oh, this doesn't fit together at all. Not yet, anyway. Suddenly I'm annoyed again.)

I enjoyed *The Wedding of River Song*, even if it never quite reached the emotional heights I felt it should have, except during its tribute to Nicholas Courtney. The Brigadier's passing was more than just a nod; it was crucial to the episode, sobering up the overconfident Doctor, forcing him to realise that he does not control time, and that he has to turn around and face his fate. Similarly with the slightly subtler reference to Nicholas Courtney's infamous "...and they were all wearing eye-patches!" anecdote, being a lovely, more personal tribute. Again, it was more than just a throwaway gag, deeply ingrained in the carefully woven plot.

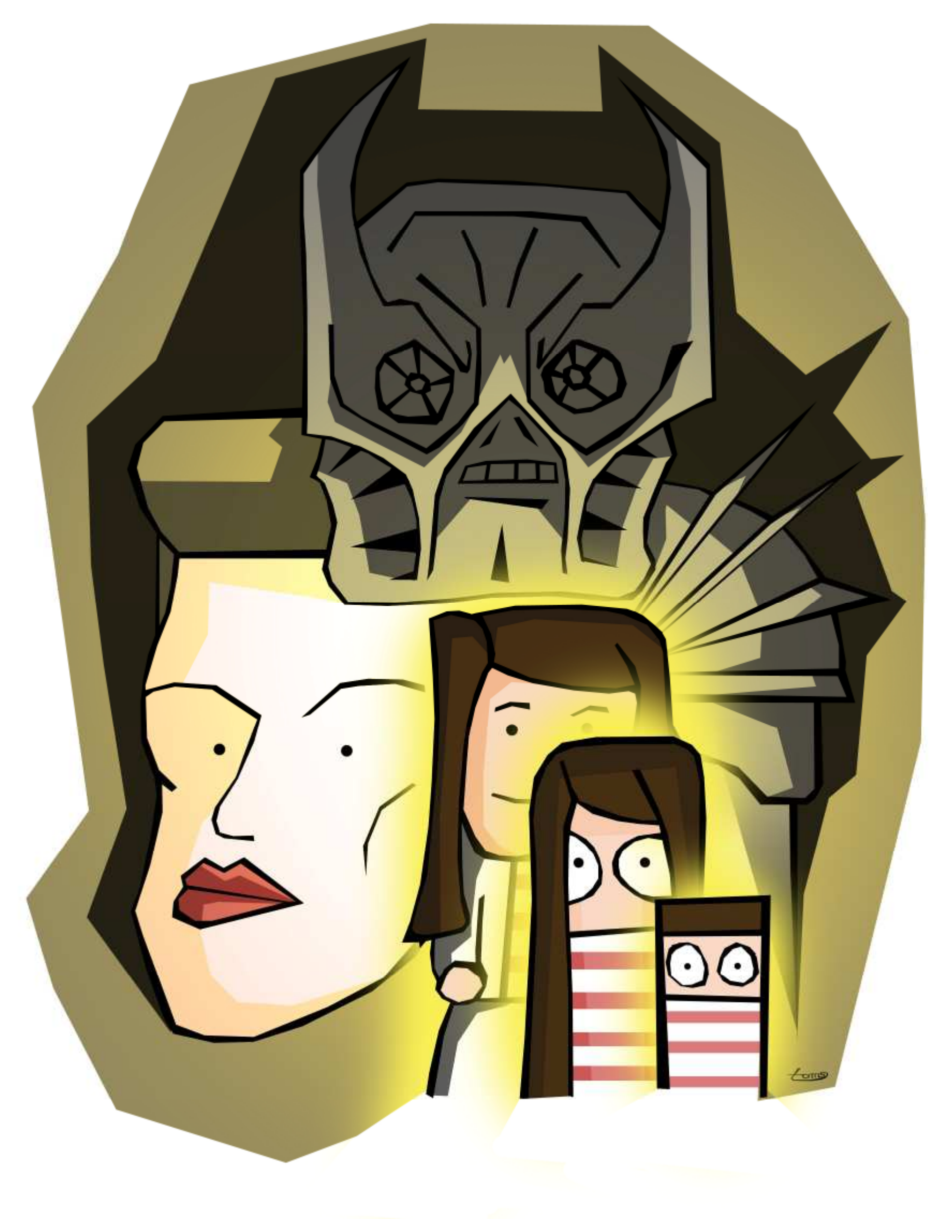
The episode's ending, however rushed it felt, includes an intriguing setup for the next series. Although there's a new wave of bollocksy foreshadowing, the idea of the Doctor keeping a lower profile than he has been recently (where he could use his reputation alone to scare off the monsters) is appealing. Overall *The Wedding of River Song* is mad, brash and insane, bristling with energy, fizzing with wild imagery, found humour in the horrific, and resolved with a kiss. What other show could do that other than *Doctor Who*? **7/10 [NB]**

REVIEWS:
RF=Richard Farrell
GP=Gary Phillips
EJ=Emily Jones
JA=Jon Arnold
JJ=Jake Johnson
ECC=Ewen Campion-Clarke
NB=Nicholas Blake
DT=Daniel Tessier

ARTWORK on all reviews:
Thomas Evans

Sarah Jane ADVENTURES SERIES 5 REVIEWS

SKY
EPISODES ONE & TWO
Written: Phil Ford
Directed: Ashley Way



The fifth series of the *Sarah Jane Adventures*, cut prematurely short by the tragic death of Elisabeth Sladen, opened with *Sky*, basically an introduction to Sarah Jane's new 'daughter'.

Unfortunately, Phil Ford's script is in many ways a reworking of *Invasion of the Bane*. Whilst in no way a bad piece of work, it must be said that it is the weakest story in this short season as two warring races attempt to bring their conflict to Earth.

In place of Mrs Wormwood we have Miss Myles, played with all the conviction of a pantomime villain – or a third-rate version of the Rani – by Brigitte Nielsen lookalike Christine Stephen Daly. Stephen Daly spends the entire adventure looking as though she is being continually poked by something sharp and walking as if her knickers were two sizes too small for comfort.

The story begins when a rather-too-clean vagrant called Hector, portrayed by Peter-Hugo Daly in quite a step down from his role as the student in Malcolm Bradbury's *The History Man*, witnesses the arrival on Earth of a green android which terrifies him. Meantime, on Bannerman Road Sarah Jane is surprised to be awoken at 5.32am by someone leaving a baby on her doorstep; a baby who fuses all the lights in the street and who proves to be just an excuse for another excruciatingly embarrassing scene with Haresh and Gita Chandra (Ace Bhatti and Mina Anwar), which does little more than set your teeth on edge with its sheer banality. Saying that, the scenes with Sky are Elisabeth Sladen's shining hour in a script which, sadly, doesn't really do her justice.

Ford makes up for this with another charming cameo from Floella Benjamin as Professor Celeste Rivers; and the scene in which Hector is upset because as a result of the intergalactic activity he can't use his radio to listen to *The Archers*! The latter is one of the very few outstanding moments of this rather pedestrian story, alongside the scene where Sarah Jane, Rani and Clyde take their leave as Professor Rivers pretends to have a sonic lipstick.

On another positive note, the scenes of Clyde babysitting Sky as the Metalkind turns up in Sarah Jane's back garden to kill Sky are both touching and amusing. Clyde's paternal instincts are very much brought to the fore here, and, given his affection for Ellie in *The Curse of Clyde Langer* and his seemingly growing relationship with Rani in *The Man Who Never Was*, one cannot help but wonder if this was a prelude to both Daniel Anthony's and Anji Mohindra's departures at what would have been the end of the season.

These blessings are in complete contrast to the events which are tediously unfolding over the road as Miss Myles and her hypnotised servant Caleb visit the Chandras who believe them to be from a firm called White Power (how did they get away with that one??). It lacks any sort of impact at all and naturally Gita gives the game away by mentioning that Sarah Jane has adopted a baby.

In yet another ancient sci-fi cliché we soon discover that Myles's world comprises both Fleshkind and Metalkind who have been at war for centuries. Metalkind are the enemies of all flesh and Sky's destiny is as a living bomb who will destroy all Metalkind and herself in the process.

Thus follows the archetypal chase around the nuclear power station as Clyde runs off with Sky. Sadly, there is something about Joss Agnew's direction which strips these scenes of their potential and leaves them somewhat lacklustre.

It is here that the *Doctor Who* cannon plagiarises its own history as in a cut-down version of the modern regeneration technique, baby Sky rapidly develops into a twelve year-old girl, a process which rather reminds one of the development of the Chimeron Princess in *Delta and the Bannermen* (1987). Sky has powers which she can neither control nor at this stage understand and sends the Metalkind flying! The cliché bandwagon rolls on as Myles again insists that Sky will fulfil her destiny as she has the power of an exploding sun.

It is a great pity that we will not really see how

Sky develops as a character. Sinead Michael's performance is charming given her youthful inexperience, and her portrayal of Sky's naivety and innocence is well done. It is amusing that both Sky and Mr Smith share a mutual fear of each other: the latter is afraid that his circuits will be blown, whilst the former is scared of being scanned. Ultimately they both learn that they have nothing to fear and come to accept each other.

At the same time, in watching Sky one is almost reminded of that irritating child in *Dragonfire* (1987) who cooed *"Night, night Teddy"*, although Michael's performance never quite plummets to those depths. In terms of her reason to be, it would seem that her role within the series would have been to replace Luke as the family genius; alas the only real opportunity she gets to display this facet of her personality is when she persuades Sarah Jane and co. that something is affecting their affection for Clyde in *The Curse of Clyde Langer*.

Again, it is hardly unexpected when Myles plugs the captured Metalkind into the nuclear reactor in order to attract the rest of the metallic species to Earth so that, with its desire to destroy all flesh, it will destroy the human race and presumably leave Myles's world in peace. Fortunately, Clyde and Rani shut down the reactor thus preventing Metalkind's arrival and in the process destroying Sky's inner bomb, which thus leaves her as a normal 12 year-old girl.

Other than another scene with ghastly Gita, in which Sarah Jane explains away events by saying that social services had sent her a baby rather than a 12 year old, the story ends with another appearance by the enigmatic shopkeeper (Cyril Nri) who previously appeared in Series Four's *Lost in Time*. Sarah Jane asks him who he is, but along with his pet parrot he again disappears and the intrigue remains; with Sladen's sadly premature death we are unlikely ever to know.

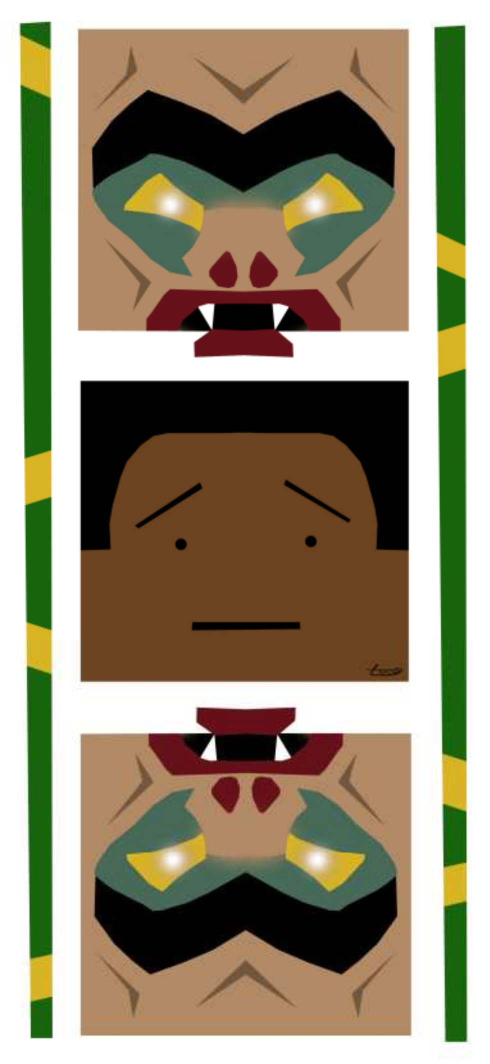
Sky is a below-average opening to this final curtailed season of the *Sarah Jane Adventures* with many similarities to *Invasion of the Bane*, which verges on cliché and generally mediocre acting and directing. The best is yet to come but, as a season opener the series – and indeed Elisabeth Sladen, who seems thoroughly bored by the whole rigmarole – deserved a far better start than this!!!! **6/10** [GP]

THE CURSE OF CLYDE LANGER

EPISODES THREE & FOUR
Written: Phil Ford
Directed: Ashley Way

The penultimate story in the final season of the Sarah Jane Adventures, Phil Ford's *The Curse of Clyde Langer* is a thinly veiled social commentary on homelessness in much the same way that *Eye of the Gorgon* touched upon the emotional trauma of psychological decline caused by Alzheimer's disease.

The difference between the two stories is that whereas *Eye of the Gorgon* was imbued with a form of optimism which fades only in the last few minutes *The Curse of Clyde Langer* hits a raw nerve which lasts long after the credits have rolled.



Although Elisabeth Sladen is present throughout in this story it is Daniel Anthony as Clyde who shines. I have long maintained that Daniel Anthony is the most talented of *The Sarah Jane Adventures* younger stars and here, under Ashley Way's superb direction he runs the gamut of emotion from the cocky self assured teenager we know to a frightened and lonely outcast shunned by everyone he thought loved him in scenes which bring Ralph McTell's haunting song *The Streets of London* to mind.

That said, the story is not without fault and the opening scene of fish falling from the sky into the playground at Park Vale School is quite utterly ridiculous and adds nothing to the intense seriousness of the narrative other than to add a touch of humour, a respect in which it fails.

We see Clyde's latent talent as a comic book artist as he pretends to be revising in the Year 11 Common Room. Clyde's troubles begin when Sarah Jane and Co visit a museum to look at a strange totem pole on exhibition there. From the moment Clyde touches the pole the very mention of his name makes everyone from his friends to even his mother, Carla (Joclyn Jee Esen) turn against him.

The scenes of Clyde out in the cold quite literally are superbly moving particularly when in pouring rain Clyde goes to a cash machine and the screen shows up his name repeatedly. Could a cut on Clyde's finger also have a connection to the strange events? If Daniel Anthony portrays the rejected and lonely Clyde superbly, other than Joclyn Jee Esen, there seems something unconvincing about everyone else's rejection of Clyde. As Haresh Chandra, Ace Bhatti and Anji Mohindra as Rani with their *"Keep away!"* seem more to be going through the motions rather than saying their lines with any sense of conviction. Clyde is rejected by Luke via his mobile phone and then by a so-called friend called Steve who looks as though he would be cast as the school bully in the former CBBC school drama *Grange Hill* if it were still going.

Although we don't know the state of her health at the time this story was produced, Elisabeth Sladen does absolute wonders with the little this story gives her to do. Apart from putting Mr Smith on a permanent scan for Clyde, Sarah Jane only comes into her own only towards its climax once Sky, (Sinead Michael seeming more at ease in her second story), convinces Sarah Jane to return to the museum.

Clyde returns to the museum where the curator Dr Mclair (Sarah Houghton) who has little more to do in the story other than reveal the story of the legend of Ezakomteh become affected after she too says Clyde's name.

Although we don't know the state of her health at the time this story was produced, Elisabeth Sladen does absolute wonders with the little this

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Clyde returns to the museum where the curator Dr Mclair (Sarah Houghton) who has little more to do in the story other than reveal the story of the legend of Ezakomteh become affected after she too says Clyde's name. Also there is that other perennial fault in the *Doctor Who* cannon in that just as when a Doctor regenerates the former Doctor's clothes fit the new Doctor almost always perfectly just as here when Ellie gives Clyde a set of dry clothes they fit perfectly!!!!

The threads start to come together when Dr Madigan begins to believe the curse and asks Sarah Jane to investigate. The legend goes that Ezakomteh descended from the sky and attempted to enslave the people of The Great Plain but they tricked him and trapped him in the great totem pole.

Whilst this is going on Ellie takes Clyde to a homeless café where they meet 'Mystic Mags' a superb second bite of the Whovian cherry for the much underrated Angela Pleasance (daughter of Donald) following on from her superb cameo as Elizabeth I in *The Shakespeare Code* who tells Clyde that *"Something bad is coming, dragon put its mark on you".*

With no explanation of this change of attitude Rani begins to realise that something isn't right, the feeling that she has lost something but doesn't know what. Carla too has similar feelings but is still angered by mention of Clyde and just as a fierce storm breaks Clyde tears up his illustration and throws it on a fire. These scenes come over as rather clichéd but one must remember that this is kids TV and things need to be tied up.

> *"The Curse of Clyde Langer is perhaps the deepest and most emotive episode of The Sarah Jane Adventures."*

Another modern *Doctor Who* cliché is brought into play, incurring memories of *Last of the Timelords* as Sky states that saying Clyde's name will break the curse so just as in the aforementioned *Doctor Who* story wherein we had a worldwide chant of *"Doctor"* here we have a more localised chant of *"Clyde Langer*" as a result of which Sarah Jane, Sky and Rani go after Clyde.

One wonders if Elisabeth Sladen had lived to complete this fifth series of *The Sarah Jane Adventures* and take it into a sixth, just how long the character of Clyde would have remained with the series as we now see him reluctant to leave Ellie, just as in the next story *The Man Who Never Was* we see that some attraction is obviously surfacing between Clyde and Rani. The mystery as to who the girl really is as her name' Ellie Fisher' has been taken from a poster. The mystery intensifies when we discover that the 'Night Dragon' Mags spoke of earlier in the episode is a haulage truck which gives lifts to the homeless to places such as London, Dublin, France and Germany. The final scene is very moving as Clyde, now restored to the love of his mother and friends looks at a drawing of Ellie and smiles.

The Curse of Clyde Langer is perhaps the deepest and most emotive episode of *The Sarah Jane Adventures*. It isn't afraid to touch raw nerves or to go deeper than a kid's show usually does. Ashley way directs superbly, the relatively light touch he brought to his two *Doctor Who* episodes *The Hungry Earth* and *Cold Blood* is replaced by the dramatic intensity he brings to *Torchwood*.

Although obviously when the two episodes were written nobody would have known that this would be the penultimate *Sarah Jane Adventure* Elisabeth Sladen is pretty much in the background for a good three quarters of the narrative as are Anji Mohindra and Sinead Michael. *The Curse of Clyde Langer* is Daniel Anthony's chance to shine and so he does brilliantly. I hope that he will continue to act now that *The Sarah Jane Adventures* has ended. His talent is too good to waste.

Despite its intensity and some poor acting from Anji Mohindra and Ace Bhatti *The Curse of Clyde Langer* is a master class in television drama, Phil Ford's intense narrative bringing the same emotional tour de force which he brought to David Tennant's penultimate *Doctor Who* story *The Water of Mars*. Despite a couple of far fetched moments it is a dramatic tour de force which deserves to collect awards by the bucketload. **9/10** [GP]

and the story goes on...
...forever

THE MAN WHO NEVER WAS

EPISODES FIVE & SIX
Written: Gareth Roberts
Directed: Joss Agnew

In an alternative universe *The Man Who Never Was* was an ordinary midseason episode, with no more weight on it than, say, *Warriors of Kudlak*, *Mona Lisa's Revenge* or *The Empty Planet*. It's not constructed as a finale, it doesn't resolve any ongoing storylines (though it does progress some), nor does it have the emotional stakes of the endings of previous seasons. Instead for almost the entirety of its duration this is a normal Sarah Jane adventure. It's only marked out from any other midseason story by the last few moments, a montage with an uplifting voiceover lifted from *The Lost Boy* and a defiant message in the face of tragic circumstance. In a way, that's fitting, a message that life goes on feeding into the lessons about growing up that have fed into the show over the past five seasons. There's no time to be maudlin, instead what we get is business as usual to the end.

The production team are a touch lucky in that the story gives each member of the cast a strong role. Lis Sladen gets to show off Sarah Jane's investigative journalistic skills one last time, expertly and coolly winding up the villain. There's some lovely comedy for Anji Mohindra and Daniel Anthony, gaining entrance to the launch of the SerfBoard by pretending to be a pair of married journalists. And lastly there's a chance for Sarah Jane's adopted children to bond, Tommy Knight symbolically passing the regular role of alien kid genius to Sinead Michael. If this was a simple midseason show it would've completed the substitution of characters necessitated by Knight's departure from his regular role. We're also lucky enough to have a pair of notable guest

guest stars, James Dreyfus of *Gimme Gimme Gimme* and *The Thin Blue Line* and Peter Bowles of *The Prisoner*, *To The Manor Born* and just about any British shows that needed an upper class cad. Bowles' role is little more than a cameo, albeit an entertaining one with him at his flirtatious, twinkly eyed best but Dreyfus makes the most of a villainous role; just the right side of melodramatically bored and frustrated but never quite over the top.

As for the story itself, what we've essentially got is a pointed critique of Apple – the SerfBoard equates to the iPad, Joseph Serf equates to Steve Jobs and the Skullions can be seen to equate to sweatshop workers who underpin the whole operation; who make those shiny gadgets so desirable and relatively obtainable. If that wasn't subtle enough, Gareth Roberts makes his point by having the aliens purchased from China, the ultimate in cheap foreign labour brought in illegally from one of the world's cheapest labour markets. Gareth Roberts has great fun in undermining the fantasies Apple sells, slyly mocking iPad junkies by making the SerfBoards fairly ordinary beneath a layer of mystique. Underneath the comic shenanigans of blustering villains and small aliens, this episode isn't the usual Sarah Jane fare about the travails of growing up, but a pointed if unsubtle critique of an aspect of the capitalist lifestyle. It's the return of the more satirical Gareth Roberts of his *New Adventures* work rather than the broad comedian of his more recent television episodes.

> "The *Sarah Jane Adventures* would always have to end with the fledglings flying the coop and as presented here, it's a note of hope for the future. Goodbye Sarah Jane, and thank you."

In many ways the normal nature of this story is a virtue. There's no time, onscreen or behind the scenes, to turn this into the overextended farewell that marked David Tennant's departure from *Doctor Who*. Instead the goodbye is even more abrupt than the Ninth Doctor's, Russell T Davies not getting the chance to oversee a glittering farewell to *Doctor Who*'s ultimate grand dame. The farewell we get is far more appropriate for a show that's made a big play of turning Sarah Jane into a mentor. The montage, with an old monologue overlaid, is an effective desperate measure, over just too quickly to bring a tear to the eye but reminding the viewer of the merits of the show they've enjoyed over the past five years. But it's the message at the end which reminds you of the point of the series. It makes the point that while one single character will have no more stories made about her, there's a new generation, the surrogate Smith family, are empowered to take on stories of their own even if it's highly likely we'll never see them. Maria, Clyde, Sky, Luke and Rani have all the time in the world to make sure that their story goes on even if Sarah Jane's won't. The *Sarah Jane Adventures* would always have to end with the fledglings flying the coop and as presented here, it's a note of hope for the future. Goodbye Sarah Jane, and thank you. **7/10** [JA]

REVIEWS:
GP=Gary Phillips
JA=Jon Arnold

Andersonic
AN APPRECIATION OF CLASSIC TV FANTASY
Flying High, Earth Men!
episode 10: Dateline Autumn 2010
Leo Eaton Interview
All The Angels and the Saint
Into Infinity
Script to Screen
Century 21 Merchandising
Brink of Disaster
Episode Retrospective
this episode:
Steve Coe Interview • Earthbound • Survival • Space Patrol
The A-Z of Joe 90 • SHADO Staff Handbook • Reviews and more

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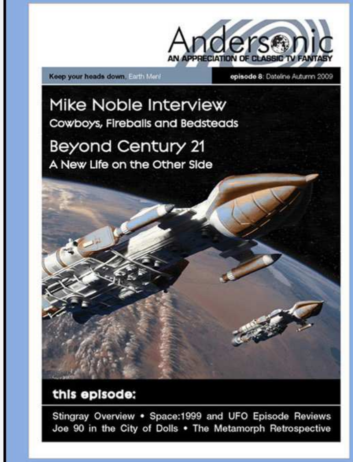
Keep On Trucking, Earth Men!
episode 9: Dateline Spring 2010
Mike Trim Interview
Designing the 21st Century
Space: 1999 On Set
At Home with the Dorcons
this episode:
The Last Enemy • The Roots of UFO • Supercar Overview
A Question of Miracles • X-Planes • Altares Log Reports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Keep your heads down, Earth Men!
episode 8: Dateline Autumn 2009
Mike Noble Interview
Cowboys, Fireballs and Bedsteads
Beyond Century 21
A New Life on the Other Side
this episode:
Stingray Overview • Space:1999 and UFO Episode Reviews
Joe 90 in the City of Dolls • The Metamorph Retrospective

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We can see your house from here, Earth Men!
episode 12: Dateline Winter 2011
John Blundall Interview
Space: 1999 'A Breath of Death'
Unfilmed Script Examined
this episode:
Robin McDonald Interview • Royal Mail's Anderson Stamps
The Return of Victor Bergman • The Last Sunset • Destruction

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Andersonic is an A5 fanzine which explores and discusses the TV series and films of Gerry Anderson - from Supercar up to New Captain Scarlet. Issue 12 will be available shortly, featuring interviews with sculptor John Blundall and Focus Puller Robin McDonald, as well as features on Royal Mail's Supermarionation Stamps and an unfilmed Space: 1999 script. Previous issues have included interviews with Shaun Whittacker-Cook, Leo Eaton and Mike Trim, as well as articles on the influence of the X-Planes on Century 21 and the fate of Century 21 miniatures that ended up in Doctor Who. Further details on contents, back issues and how to contribute can be found on our website...

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FANWNAK

FANWNAK's previous editor, the shady Mr Ruxpin, is still in jail and the Doctor Who Fanzine "**FANWNAK**" is under new management. The newly resurrected Adric, has been hard at work on the upcoming Issue 6, following the surprising news that the zine has now officially out sold DWM* by pushing 95,000 issues last month. Adric's Issue 5 was phenomenally popular with fans who shunned the inferior DWM in favour of **FANWNAK.** After the scandal that Issue 4 caused, Adric has now restored the reputation of the zine thanks to investment from Barrowman's Sparkly Barrows.

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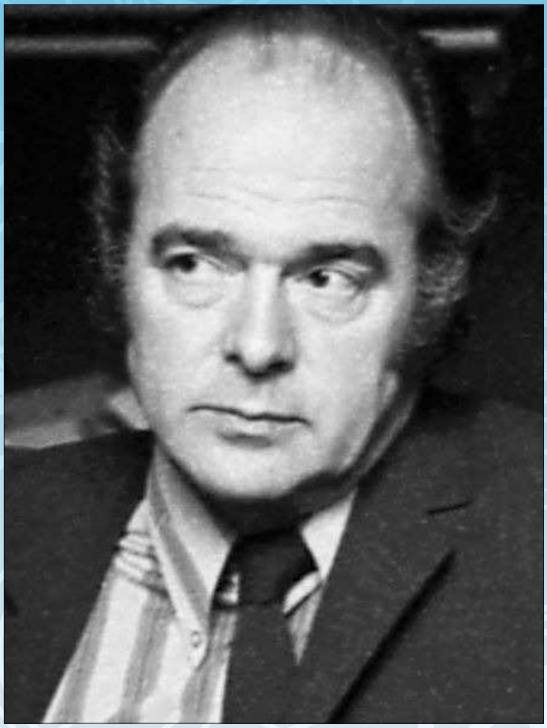
Screwdrivers, Scaries & Scarves

Jez Strickley

Barry Letts – Producer Extraordinaire

Earlier in this issue Jon Arnold writes in 'Going Native' that moves behind the scenes are arguably more important than a change in lead actor. I tend to agree. The humour of Season Seventeen had script editor Douglas Adams' fingerprints all over it, whilst the heavy science of Season Eighteen was very much the brainchild of Adams' successor, Christopher H Bidmead. A few years earlier and it was producer Phillip Hinchliffe and script editor Robert Holmes who spearheaded the horror tropes of Tom Baker's opening three seasons. And it was daring first-time producer Verity Lambert who oversaw the sci-fi-history hybrid that launched the Doctor's travels in the first place.



In short, the show's production team – yesterday's producer and script editor combo, today's show runner – is fundamental to the programme's format. As such, whilst these individuals may not be the face of the programme insofar as the public is concerned, they are certainly the glue that holds it together. Their importance cannot be overstated.

> *"He had a vision; a vision of the series which was in synch with the events of the day."*

To my mind, amongst all the behind-the-scenes stalwarts who have guided the Doctor's travels over nearly half a century, one figure in particular stands out the most. That person is Barry Letts. The credits come thick and fast: producer, executive producer, director and script writer, as well as noveliser and author of two original *Doctor Who* novels. In fact, his impact on the series arguably makes him the single-most influential person in its history.

Let's consider that last statement. After being given his first taste of *Doctor Who* by directing Season Five's *The Enemy of the World* (1967/68), Letts picked up the producer's reins at a time when the series was at a deeply critical stage. His predecessors, Derrick Sherwin and Peter Bryant, had bequeathed to him the UNIT format which saw the series transformed from the largely extraterrestrial travels of Patrick Troughton's cosmic hobo into the dark and gritty contemporary Earth adventures of Jon Pertwee's dandy. Indeed, in style and approach Season Seven – Letts' first as producer – was far removed from Season Six, and it was this largely experimental structure which Letts was expected to deliver.

Another producer might have been content to leave the new format – which was a popular success – more or less untouched. But Letts' astute foresight enabled him to see that a balance needed to be struck, so that the programme's new adult orientation could be retained without alienating its younger viewers. The answer was Season Eight, and the arrival of regulars Jo Grant and Captain Yates, along with a brand new recurring baddie, the Master. Throw in a dash of space-time travel and you have the default setting for the subsequent three seasons, and the beginning of the series' most popular period since the halcyon days of Dalekmania.

Letts' Midas touch is hard to deny. In the process of forging the enormously popular UNIT family he hired two young up-and-coming actresses, Katy Manning and Elisabeth Sladen, who went on to portray two iconic companions. He co-wrote what is widely considered to be the definitive UNIT adventure, *The Dæmons* (1971), and directed *Terror of the Autons* (1971), *Carnival of Monsters* (1973) and *Planet of the Spiders* (1974). Along with Terrance Dicks he developed the idea of a recurring Time Lord nemesis for the Doctor, in the vein of Arthur Conan Doyle's Professor Moriarty. The end result, the Master, has since become *the* villain of the series. And, if all that weren't enough, after five years as producer, and almost as a parting gesture, it was Letts who gave us the incredible Fourth Doctor, courtesy of hiring a certain jobbing actor by the name of Tom Baker.

But the story doesn't end there. A year after leaving the series Letts returned to direct *The Android Invasion* (1975); and some five years later he took the role of executive

But the story doesn't end there. A year after leaving the series Letts returned to direct *The Android Invasion* (1975); and some five years later he took the role of executive producer for Season Eighteen, offering a guiding hand to John Nathan-Turner in his opening stint as producer, and helping to deliver one of the strongest seasons of the decade.

Influential? I should say so.

Aside from being an artful pilot where producing was concerned, Letts built a strong and above all trusting relationship with his script editor, Terrance Dicks. Perhaps this point more than any other is the reason for his weighty influence; he had an astute judgement of the gifts and powers of those around him, and the corresponding thinking were directly wired into the world around him.

Yet there's more to Letts than a list of accolades as long as your arm. He had a vision; a vision of the series which was in synch with the events of the day. Stories like *Inferno* (1970) and *The Green Death* (1973) addressed concerns over technology run amok and environmental abuse; the echoes of imperial racism were underlined in *The Mutants* (1972); and unscrupulous corporatism reared its ugly head in *Colony in Space* (1971). Then there was the highly topical union issue in *The Monster of Peladon* (1974) and the socio-environmental utopianism of *Invasion of the Dinosaurs* (1974). Indeed, as an imaginative and farsighted producer, it was as if Letts' ability to draw out and develop those skills still further.

Letts knew his stuff all right. Between 1970 and 1974 he guided *Doctor Who* towards a level of popularity only matched by Tom Baker's Doctor at his zenith, and much more recently during the era of David Tennant's Tenth Doctor. His extraordinary success is even more marked when taken in the context of his fellow producers. Certainly, Verity Lambert was the hugely successful pioneer, Innes Lloyd the pragmatic innovator and Peter Bryant and Derrick Sherwin the monster gurus and UNIT architects. However, none of the above managed to deliver the long-running popularity which the series enjoyed under Letts. Phillip Hinchcliffe comes a close second in my eyes, but he sailed a little too close to the wind with his tougher brand of narrative and brought about the need for the more lighthearted storytelling which Graeme Williams was expected to turn out. More, although John Nathan-Turner may have reinvigorated the series at the turn of the 1980s, his lack of close attention to scripting – the very bread and butter of producing – eventually gave way to the conditions which saw the programme suffer from undercooked storylines and misguided direction.

As I see it, it's hard to argue that Letts has a rival insofar as producing is concerned. And, the fact that he also scripted and directed, not to mention writing the occasional radio play and original novel, puts him right up there as an out-and-out polymath and probably the most important person in the history of *Doctor Who*.

Barry Letts an icon? I'd say that was an understatement.

DALEK'S ADVOCATE

THE CASE FOR MICHAEL GRADE: A RESPONSE

Back in *Whotopia 21*, Jon Arnold wrote a defence of Michael Grade, the 1980's BBC Controller responsible for *Doctor Who*'s cancellation. I'm writing this response because I feel some things need reiterating about Michael Grade and 1980's *Doctor Who*.

"Fans have argued that 'you're not supposed to like him..."

The 1980s saw the classic British values of restraint, caution and mediation that *Doctor Who* once represented, become cast aside by the impact of Thatcher's government. Society and politics became more confrontational and belligerent, based on absolutes, hyperbole and a 'do or die' ethos. Perhaps it's inevitable that *Doctor Who* then took a more uncomfortable, uncompromising direction, with a more confrontational, belligerent Doctor.

1980s entertainment placed emphasis on branding and reductionism, and resultantly *Doctor Who* began to designate set costumes for characters and regularly revisit old foes. Meanwhile the Doctor became an exaggerated, simplified reduction ad absurdum of himself. The Fifth Doctor took the Doctor's pacifist leanings to unreasonable extremes. This was exasperated to my mind by the character inheriting JN-T's martyr-complex and Eric Saward's passive-aggression. Consequently, stories like *Warriors of the Deep* and *Resurrection of the Daleks* (both 1984) turned out as contrived, mean-spirited, death-laden affairs in which the pacifistic Fifth Doctor no longer seemed able to work as a hero.

The Sixth Doctor was a deliberately aggressive contrast, and harked back to William Hartnell's original irascible, untrustworthy, antihero incarnation. A long-term plan was to start the Sixth Doctor volatile and unstable, then gradually mellow him out and unpeel the layers from there. Like many bad decisions made under JN-T's producership, the thinking behind it seemed akin to Munchausen Syndrome.

I've wondered would the Sixth Doctor's violence be as controversial or troubling had he not followed the pacifist Fifth Doctor. Previous Doctors had occasionally resorted to violence. The Fourth Doctor had killed enemies in *Terror of the Zygons* (1975) and *The Brain of Morbius* (1976). If the series had skipped from *The Seeds of Doom* (1976) straight to *Attack of the Cybermen* (1985), would things have felt like business as usual?

Alas no. The Fourth Doctor's warm friendship with Sarah Jane is what emphasised his fondness for humanity, and reinforced that any violent action he took was in protection of Sarah and mankind. This wasn't apparent from the Sixth Doctor and Peri's sniping, antagonistic relationship.

Fans have argued that 'you're not supposed to like him, that's the point', but consider the antihero characters in say *Goodfellas* (1990). They didn't need such excuses made for them, because good writing made them likeable and compelling. The Sixth Doctor mostly lacked that kind of writing, and despite Colin Baker's intent to reassert the Doctor as a forthright, moral force of nature, his Doctor largely came across as thuggish and petty.

Doctor Who wasn't the only brand of 1980s entertainment to indulge excessive violent content. The scene in *Attack* where Lytton has his hands crushed by Cybermen (to symbolise his 'penance') isn't so different from the macho 'pain builds character' philosophy of *Robocop* or *Die Hard*. 1980s *Doctor Who* was overly reliant on violence to make its low-budget stories seem more vivid and visceral, and often in contrived, badly-

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Was "Attack of the Cybermen" really that violent?

The Doctor's apparent lack of moral outrage in *Vengeance* was also problematic. Despite the loathsome society he'd landed in, the Doctor seemed far more troubled by his TARDIS breaking down than anything afterwards. This undermined any supposed noble cause behind his violent actions.

The Two Doctors (1985) is a controversial story for the scene where the Doctor kills Shockeye with cyanide. Fans have argued this was a justified response to Shockeye's brutal murder of poor Oscar. However, immediately after Oscar's murder, the Sixth Doctor didn't even seem to care and started selfishly squabbling with his earlier self. Much like in *Warriors* where the Fifth Doctor, oblivious to the Silurians massacring people all around him, kept insisting they were noble and worth protecting, it was like the show had become a warped anti-drama where story events don't affect, cohere, or register with our protagonists anymore.

It's hard to understand what went wrong with *The Two Doctors*. The Second Doctor and Jamie should've been magical together even if they'd both spent the story locked in a cupboard. Alas they were merely opening highlights of a top-heavy story that went quickly downhill and sour. The Second Doctor actually became caught up in the story's confused morality, and even expressed downright fascistic sentiments about the Androgums being irredeemable and impossible to enlighten.

Whilst usually the 1980s Doctors' worst characterisations were down to JN-T shunning past writers in favour of new blood who didn't understand the Time Lord's character, *The Two Doctors* was written by Robert Holmes. Surely if any writer could give the Sixth Doctor more layered characterisation, it was him. Few writers understood the Doctor's duality better – the rebel against an alien society of detached, sanctimonious snobs, but who's also a product of that society. In fact, who better to write for this more 'dangerous' Doctor than the author of *The Deadly Assassin*'s shocking first cliffhanger?

Perhaps Robert Holmes' frustrations with JN-T's story demands had led to him writing his most angry, mean-spirited work. Admitted *The Brain of Morbius* had its gruesome moments and pro-caste system overtones, and *The Sunmakers* (1977) had glorified lynch mob violence, but those stories contained enough spirit and pastiche elements to feel harmless. But the nastiness of *The Two Doctors* felt worryingly sincere.

So was Michael Grade right?

I've often argued that the worst 1980s stories so damaged the Doctor's character, that it'd be better had the show ended on *Logopolis* (1981). But if I took off my purist hat a moment and admitted that *Doctor Who*'s always been a work in progress, a boundless experimental show in flux that sometimes eluded its own makers, then surely there's enough promise in Season *Twenty Two* to earn a reprieve.

Despite the aforementioned flaws with *Vengeance*, I can't deny it was an intelligent political story, with much to say about media power, and the prison system being antithetical to rehabilitation by being an environment of spiritual decay, with a brutalising effect on both prisoners and guards. It wasn't the safe, populist TV Michael Grade wanted, but it still deserved to be transmitted.

Revelation of the Daleks (1985) should've been enough to save the show in a sane world. More, watching the story in isolation, one could believe the show had never been healthier. It's a beautifully forward-looking story, amidst a nihilistic era. Eric Saward had penned a compelling futuristic vision and thought-provoking speculations on the pitfalls and promises of future medical science and cryogenics being able to make immortality possible. The story skilfully blends that cerebral content with moments of horror, biting satirical black comedy and Alexei Sayle destroying Daleks with rock 'n' roll laser beams, into a gorgeous, exquisite colourful collage. In combinations only this show can produce, yet unlike anything the show's ever produced before. It's amazing that something so cool and slick came from the same production team as *Time-Flight* (1982).

Further, I've always believed that any modern revival of the show would have been

> *"I've always believed that any modern revival of the show would have been wise to look to Revelation as its model."*

Would this be the ideal model for modern Who?

Further, I've always believed that any modern revival of the show would have been wise to look to *Revelation* as its model.

Fans have suggested *Revelation* is more about set-pieces than plot. But I believe the very thrust and focus of the story comes from its characters' labyrinthine journey into Davros' impenetrable lair. A journey of many failed attempts, tutorials on honour, and personal nightmares and demons faced, such as Natasha encountering her deceased father reborn as a Dalek. Ironically, it's the Skarosian Daleks who finally penetrate the lair and save the day.

The story is elevated above the era's usual gruesomeness by a greater competence and adultness of approach. It makes a stylistic virtue of the era's calloused world-view, (Kara's lamenting of an exterminated Vogel "You know how difficult it is to find good secretaries"), but it also sees the moral confusion finally achieving clarity, with an understanding that things aren't morally simplistic.

The character of Orcini, the warrior assassin, demonstrates how criminals and vigilantes can be honourable and maybe even necessary to a society plagued by crime and corruption. It's this kind of writing that makes the viewer question our own values and laws. Even Davros is shown to be capable of acts of philanthropy, of using his science for good, and being a saviour to the galaxy. The show could still be its own cliché crusher.

There are hints that Eric Saward had finally 'got' the Doctor. Like the moment where the Doctor's trying to hypnotise and calm the savage mutant, or his furious outrage at Davros when he learns the body snatchers have been exterminated, which is made all the more poignant and humanistic because the body snatchers had been scorned and reviled by every other character in the story. But at the same time the Doctor's newly-learned ruthless pragmatism and adaptation to a savage universe is maintained (like his discreetly kicking a gun to Orcini). I feel *Revelation* wasn't just another false dawn of quality like *Enlightenment* (1983) or *The Caves of Androzani* (1984) because it saw Eric Saward prove to himself how good he could be.

What would Season Twenty-Three be like if the cancellation hadn't seen the entire season scrapped in favour of *The Trial of a Time Lord* (1986)? Well, the unmade *The Nightmare Fair* and *Mission to Magnus* were to include Ice Warriors and the Celestial Toymaker, which suggest that the season would've just been more derivative fanwank.

Then again, if 1980s *Doctor Who* looked cheap and unconvincing, then perhaps the fans, being predisposed to believe and invest in the show (especially when the show emphasises a continuity and grittiness) were the ideal audience to pitch the show at. On paper, giving adult fans their childhood back with parades of Ice Warriors should've made for the kind of nostalgic comfort food TV that 1980s audiences needed. Unfortunately the show's violence distinctly soured this comfort food.

But Big Finish's recent audio adaptations of *The Nightmare Fair* and *Mission to Magnus* hinted that the makers nearly got it right. The former was a slightly less high-brow follow-up to *City of Death*, and would've been an absolute treat for fans and children alike. The latter was thin on plot, but it had a charm to its avaricious villains Anzor and Sil, and to the planet Magnus ruled by Amazonian Women (despite some accusations of sexism, the story clearly presents the male characters as the bigger fools), and had it been filmed, the cast would've definitely had fun with it.

I felt I had discovered a missing piece of the show. It compounded just how much the cancellation came at the worst time. Season Twenty-Three could have been the most fun, entertaining season of the decade, and one I think the kids would've enjoyed. The show might've gained another generation of young fans, who'd become fans of the show as a whole. Colin's era could have finally found its niche, and frustratingly it would've been exactly the innocent, light-hearted, family-friendly fare that Grade was demanding.

Losing Season Twenty-Three is the one part of the cancellation I'll never understand. It would've shown the Sixth Doctor at his most moral and endearing. Unfortunately the light-hearted *Mission to Magnus* got scrapped for the far nastier *Mindwarp* (1986) – an unpleasant relapse to *The Twin Dilemma* (1984).

The Trial of a Time Lord (1986) was like an on-screen existential identity crisis. Despite its ambitious ideas- (like the Doctor confronting his evil future self; the Time Lords destroying Earth) it suffered an indulgence of fluffy padding and a poorly resolved ending which ironically made the whole over-story feel inconsequential. Then JN-T was forced by Grade's snidely sacking of Colin Baker, to reinvent the show for a new era, and so he fell back on his creative roots in pantomime. Whereas originally the show was rediscovering a natural light-heartedness, now the lightness was dictated, forced and sanitised.

Why was JN-T forced to stay? Perhaps *Doctor Who* was a poisoned chalice ever since 1977 when Mary Whitehouse's moral crusading got the series' best producer Philip Hinchcliffe sacked. JN-T got the job because his predecessor Graham Williams had been impressed with his helpful budgeting advice. The BBC had allegedly admired JN-T's early work on the show, such as casting Peter Davison, and producing the lavish *The Keeper of Traken* (1981) and *Black Orchid* (1982). Perhaps the BBC kept JN-T on because he could sometimes work budgetary miracles that justified the little they spent on the series.

The show wasn't doing that badly in the ratings before the cancellation. I think fandom horrendously overstates *Attack*'s ratings drop. Ordinarily the show might have recovered easily. JN-T had been brilliant at promoting the show, but Grade's sabotage destroyed the show's profile from thereon. Many viewers were apparently unaware the show was even still on in 1987. Rescheduling a show can be fatal enough because even devoted viewers hate being stood up too often, but scheduling it alongside *Coronation Street* was deliberate manslaughter. *Doctor Who* was nearly a world-beater in 1983. It wasn't dying until Grade did everything to kill it.

Jon Arnold's right that Jonathan Powel had a hand in the cancellation too, but Powel didn't gloat about it or insult the fans; and his appearance on the *'Trials and Tribulations'* documentary to tell his side of the story, rather than being cowardly or treating it as beneath him, gains my respect.

Of course Grade was brought in because the BBC was suffering cuts, and so someone from the more commercial, ruthless side of TV was brought in to downsize the company, and decide what had to go. America was producing glossy sci-fi like *V: The Miniseries*. *Doctor Who* was an old show past its prime, with each story requiring new props and sets. The BBC instead wanted inexpensive shows like *Eastenders* with reusable, familiar standing sets. You could argue Grade was just a pawn doing what he was brought in to do... provided you don't actually quote him, because he always delights in playing the gloating bully who kicked someone's sandcastle.

> *"I'd seen Star Wars, Close Encounters... then I had to watch these cardboard things clonking across the floor trying to scare kids..."*

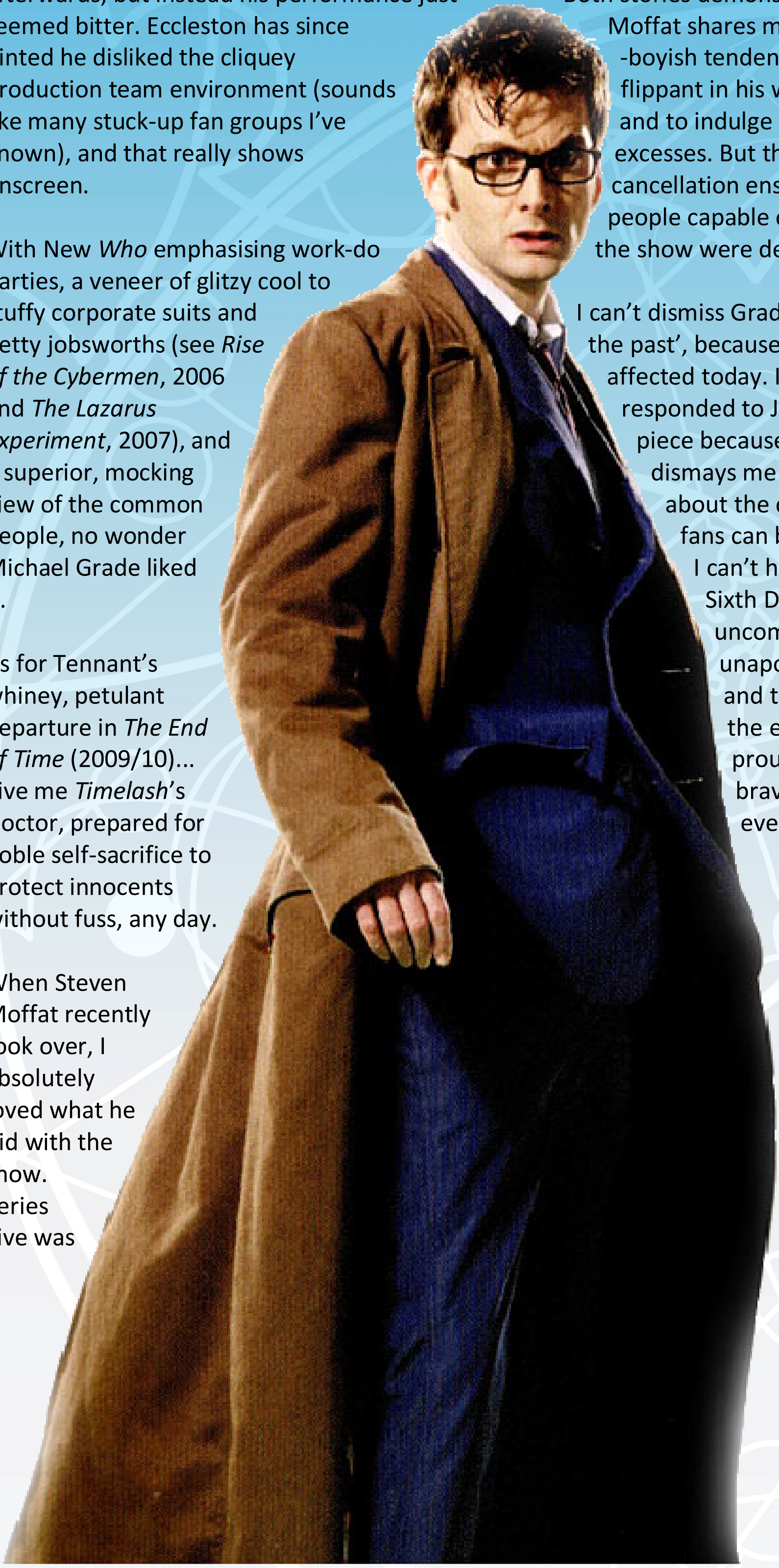
This flat out contradicts his claim that he cancelled it for being 'too horrific', and betrays Grade's shocking ignorance about television production and what little the makers had to work with. Maybe no Hollywood budgets could redeem *Warriors of the Deep* or *The Twin Dilemma*. But Grade denied the show the budget that would allow it to satisfy his lofty superficial standards in the first place.

Now Jon also highlighted how Michael Grade has since praised New *Who* and openly congratulated RTD on the show's revival. Does that prove he could've been won over if JN-T got it right, and that the show actually benefitted from a rethinking rest period?

Well I didn't see RTD's *Doctor Who* as any improvement on the Sixth Doctor era. In fact, in many ways it was far less imaginative or daring.

Doctor Who only returned because the BBC wanted to tempt the writer of *Queer as Folk* onto their staff. But *Queer as Folk* was a slice-of-life show. It hardly demonstrated RTD's suitability to writing sci-fi or *Doctor Who*. Indeed, under RTD, *Doctor Who* became a soap opera, grounded to modern London and domestics, whilst the Doctor became far less enlightened or mature, and more like a bloke from *Eastenders*.

I found Christopher Eccleston's Doctor far more troublingly thuggish than the Sixth Doctor. In *World War Three* (2005), the Doctor threw his electrified badge onto the Slitheen and ran. Wouldn't any previous Doctor have cut the power in case any of the electrified UNIT personnel might have survived? In *Bad Wolf* (2005), the Doctor threatens the Controller for daring to dismiss Rose's 'death'. Wouldn't the old Doctor have understood that the Controller's been enslaved to the machine since childhood and literally can't empathise? Never mind his irresponsible behaviour in *The Long Game* (2005). Eccleston could've softened that belligerence with a look of regret afterwards, but instead his performance just seemed bitter. Eccleston has since hinted he disliked the cliquey production team environment (sounds like many stuck-up fan groups I've known), and that really shows onscreen.



With New *Who* emphasising work-do parties, a veneer of glitzy cool to stuffy corporate suits and petty jobsworths (see *Rise of the Cybermen*, 2006 and *The Lazarus Experiment*, 2007), and a superior, mocking view of the common people, no wonder Michael Grade liked it.

As for Tennant's whiney, petulant departure in *The End of Time* (2009/10)... give me *Timelash*'s Doctor, prepared for noble self-sacrifice to protect innocents without fuss, any day.

When Steven Moffat recently took over, I absolutely loved what he did with the show. Series Five was beautiful and far closer to the show's adventurous spirit. Suddenly it didn't matter where the show went wrong previously, because it was worth it for this. But midway through Series Six and my hopes in Moffat's producership were suddenly devastated by the heartless *Let's Kill Hitler* (2011) and the mess of *The Wedding of River Song* (2011). Both stories demonstrated how Moffat shares many of RTD's fan-boyish tendencies to be flippant in his writing approach and to indulge ridiculous excesses. But then Grade's cancellation ensured the only people capable of resurrecting the show were devoted fanboys.

I can't dismiss Grade's actions as 'in the past', because the show's still affected today. I mainly responded to Jon Arnold's piece because it sometimes dismays me how apologetic about the classic series we fans can be. It's then that I can't help admiring the Sixth Doctor era's uncompromising, unapologetic bite, and thinking maybe the era is actually prouder, bolder and braver than we'll ever be.

| Thomas Cookson

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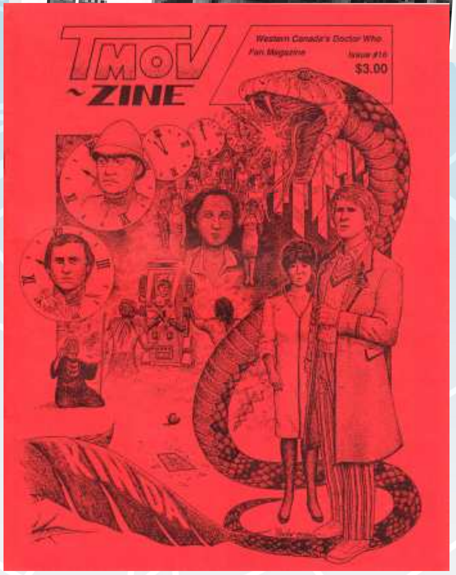
THE FANZINE CORNER

BY BOB FURNELL

J
jigsaw
Doctor Who
The Monster Years
Season 5
In Review
When The West Was Wild
Revisit The Wild Wild West



Vancouver and Canadian Fandom

Doctor Who first aired in Canada on the CBC in 1965. It wasn't seen again nationally until YTV picked it up for broadcast in 1989. However between the first broadcasts on CBC in 1965 and YTV in 1989, various cities in Canada were treated to broadcasts of *Doctor Who*. Many cities in Ontario were treated to regular broadcasts on TV Ontario beginning in 1976, while if you lived in Alberta and had cable TV, you were able to watch nightly broadcasts on the Spokane Washington PBS affiliate KSPS. Residents living in Vancouver, the lower mainland, (this is the metropolitan residential area outside of Vancouver proper), and Victoria were able to watch *Doctor Who* first on CKVU (1976-82) and then via KVOS in Bellingham Washington (a small city just south of the US/Canada border which broadcast signal extended to these cities).

Wherever *Doctor Who* was broadcast in Canada, small pockets of fandom sprouted up. Nationally there was the *Doctor Who* Information Network – more commonly referred to DWIN – which was founded in 1983 and catered to *Doctor Who* fans on the national level. DWIN published its own fanzine, the bi-monthly publication, *Enlightenment*. DWIN also had many local chapters (regional groups), scattered across Canada. The bulk of these 'chapters' were in cities throughout Ontario, but they also existed in Canadian cities such as Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Victoria, Montreal and St. John's. In addition to the national group fanzine, a few of these local 'chapters' produced their own fanzine as well, such as The Time Meddlers in Vancouver British Columbia who published *TMOVzine* and The Cosmic Hoboes in Peterborough Ontario who published *The Cosmic Hobo.*

Outside of DWIN, a few regional groups sprouted up such as The Vanwhovians in Vancouver; The British Science Fiction and Telefantasy Society in Calgary and the Telefantasy Appreciation Society of Canada based in Vancouver.

Doctor Who fandom in Edmonton Alberta first surfaced in 1981/82 with the formation of the DWIN chapter, The TARDIS Companions, founded by your columnist. The group didn't publish a fanzine per se but did publish a few information sheets about the show that were handed out to members upon joining the group, as well as distributed at the club's one-and-only open house in 1983.

Local Vancouver fandom blossomed in 1985 with the formation of The Time Meddlers of Vancouver founded by Bob Furnell, Dean King and Linda Aranha. It was in 1987 that the group first began publishing *TMOVzine*, the club's very own fanzine. *TMOVzine* featured your typical array of fanzine material such as articles, news, reviews, puzzles, club news, artwork, fiction and more. The first issue, published in 1987, was a small affair consisting of eight pages of text, a blue colored cover page featuring the fanzine's logo and artwork by Martin Proctor. The fanzine was produced in the 8.5x11 inch format and by printing articles on a dot-matrix printer that had been written up using a word processor, then cut out and pasted onto a master sheet that was photocopied to produce each double sided page. The pages were then assembled and stapled with a single staple in the upper left-hand corner. Although amateurish and simple compared to some of the fanzines published today, it was considered cutting-edge technology at the time.

TMOVzine's initial editor was Karen Bartlett who oversaw the fanzine's first two years. In 1990 Janette King took over the editorial duties and continued to edit the fanzine for the next four years. The fanzine folded in January 1994 after 24 issues.

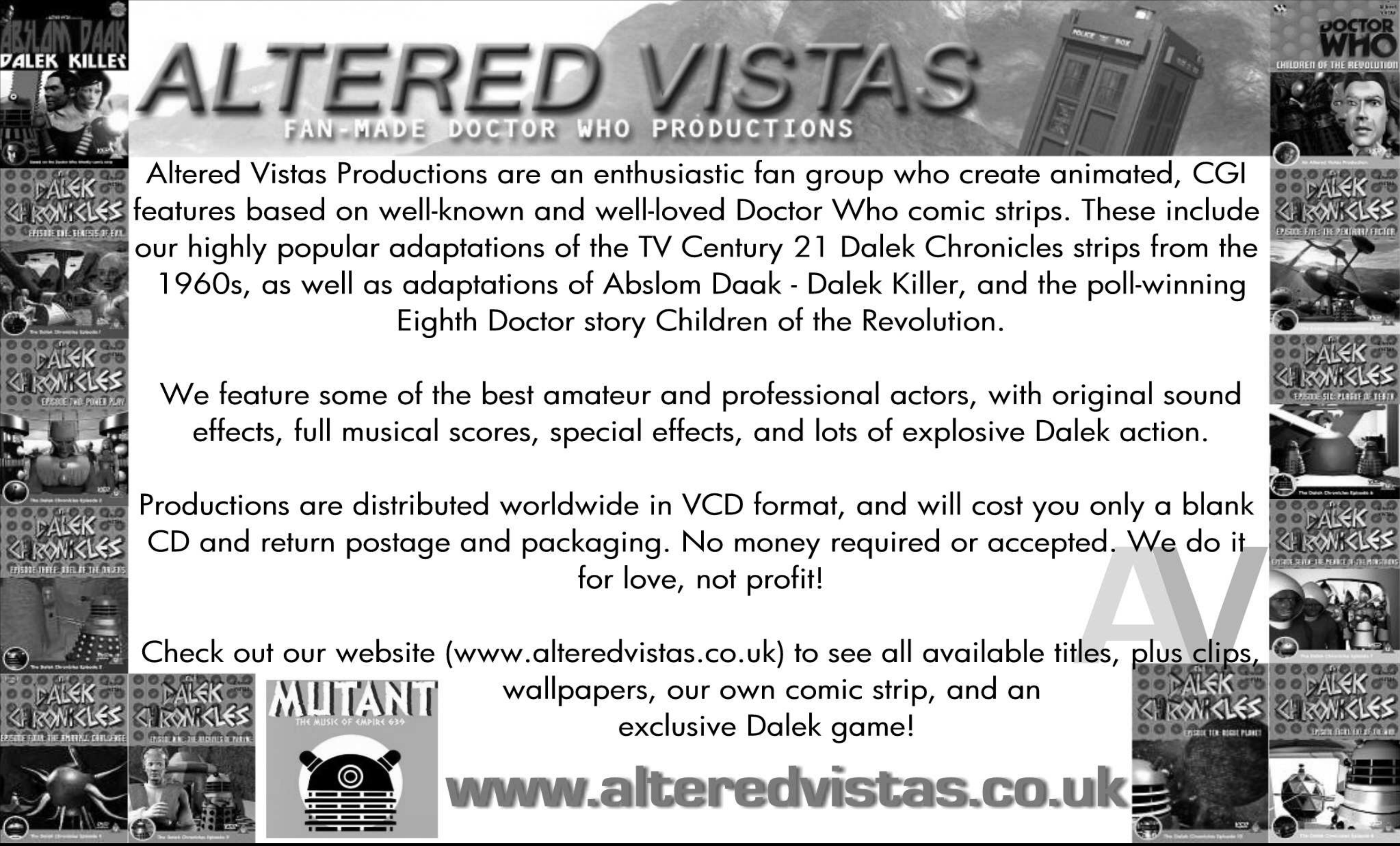
The Vanwhovians were a small group of *Doctor Who* fans based in Burnaby BC. The group started in 1987 and, although it was only in existence for two or three years, it did manage to publish a short-lived fanzine that featured the artwork of local fan artist Warren Oddsson. Like *TMOVzine*, The Vanwhovians fanzine was published in the 8.5x11 inch format produced using cut-and-paste and photocopied technology and featured an array of articles, reviews, puzzles, games, fiction and artwork.

After the demise of The Vanwhovians in 1989/90 and The Time Meddlers in 1993, Vancouver saw the launch of a new club in 1992 called the Telefantasy Appreciation Society of Canada or TASC. The club was founded by Bob Furnell and initially started as a *Doctor Who* club but branched out to cover British, American and Canadian science fiction and fantasy television in the late-1990s. TASC launched its own fanzine called *Jigsaw* in January 1992.

Jigsaw was a much fancier affair. It was published in the 8.5x11 inch sized format, featured glossy black and white covers and was assembled using Word Perfect and later Microsoft Word and printed straight to paper from electronic files. The magazine initially only concentrated on *Doctor Who* but, like the club, branched out to include American, Canadian and British science fiction and fantasy television in the late-1990s. The fanzine was basically a one-man show being edited, published and laid out by Bob Furnell with contributions from both members of TASC and other sci-fi and fantasy fans.

The fanzine featured interviews, articles, reviews, columns, features, episode guides and more and was published roughly five times per year. During its publication life, *Jigsaw* also published three special publications: *The Doctor Who Ratings Guide* (1990), the *First Wave Special* (1999) and the *Farscape Special* (2000). *Jigsaw* itself continued until 2001 when it ceased publication after producing 45 continuous issues.

Local *Doctor Who* fandom was fairly quiet during the period covering 2001 to 2002, however that was to change when, in October 2003, the very first issue of ***Whotopia*** was published. ***Whotopia*** continues to be published today and will celebrate its twenty-fifth issue in 2012.



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